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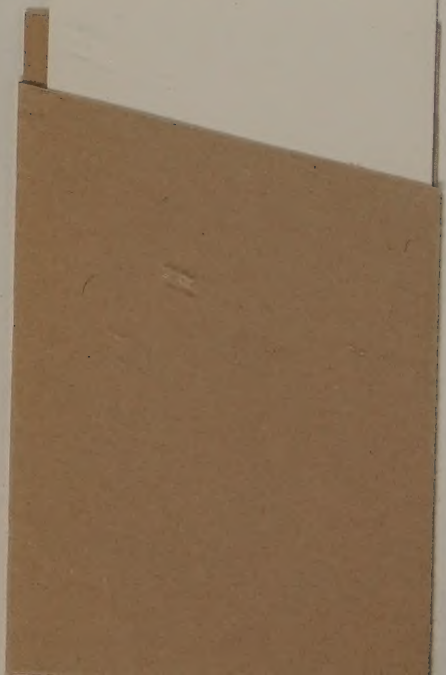

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MODERN ENGLAND

FROM THE REFORM BILL TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY

JUSTIN McCARTHY, M.P.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES," ETC.

* *

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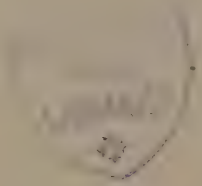

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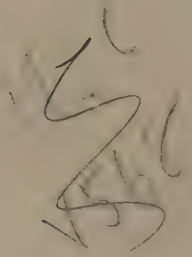

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I

THE CONVICT SHIP

SOMETHING that might almost be called a rush of reform had come on many departments of our legislation and our social system. The rigour of capital punishment was reduced by several successive Acts of Parliament. Up to 1832 horse-stealing, sheep-stealing, coining, larceny to the value of £5 in a dwelling-house, and a number of other such offences were punishable by death. At one period, a little earlier, a hungry person stealing a loaf of bread from a baker's shop was liable to the death penalty, and many such offenders were actually put to death. The juries at length began to revolt against the capital sentences, and made their objections felt in a very practical sort of way. When a larceny to the value of £5 from a dwelling-house was a crime to be visited by capital punishment, the jurors frequently got out of the hideous duty imposed upon them by bringing a verdict which declared that the value of the article stolen was £2 10s. or some such smaller sum than the amount needed to make a capital offence under the law. In 1832 capital punishment was actually

abolished by statute for horse-stealing, sheep-stealing, and many similar offences, including the larceny of goods to the value of £5 from a dwelling-house. Men like Romilly and Bentham devoted themselves heart and soul to the mitigation of our penal laws. One influence that assisted them considerably in their humane efforts was found in the fact that the compassion of the judges, of the law officers, and of the Crown, was found to be acting constantly in mitigation of the death sentences. A humane judge recommended to mercy, and humane law officers advised the Sovereign to act upon the recommendation in many cases which were in nowise distinguishable, so far as degree of guilt was concerned, from other cases in which convicted offenders had been publicly executed. In 1824, for instance, one thousand and sixty-six persons underwent sentence of death of whom only forty were executed. In 1825 one thousand and thirty-six were sentenced to die, and only fifty were put to death. Thus, as men like Romilly and Bentham were constantly pointing out, the one great terror of a sentence of any kind, the certainty of its being carried out, was removed from the penal code. The chances were many to one that a man or woman sentenced to death for some comparatively trivial offence would get off despite the rigour of the Act of Parliament. This disproportion between the number of death sentences and the number of executions was sure to grow greater year after year, according as public opinion became more and more aroused to the monstrosity of the blood-stained Code that had so long existed. Therefore by

Act after Act of Parliament, this, that, and the other offence became gradually removed from the black list of the death sentences, until by degrees the death penalty came to be applied, in point of fact, to cases of murder alone. On the other hand our sentences gained in certainty what they lost, if such a word may be allowed, in severity. That is to say the criminal was made to know exactly the risk he was running, and was taught that if he committed a certain crime he would be sure to incur a certain penalty. It is, of course, a question with many enlightened and philanthropic persons whether the death penalty ever ought to be inflicted at all. There is still something of uncertainty about the infliction of capital punishment. A famous parliamentary orator not many years dead once said, in an outburst of sarcasm, that if he were to advise a criminal, his advice would be above all things not to commit a commonplace murder. If you commit a commonplace murder, he went on to say, you will be tried, convicted, and hanged, and the outer public will never take any notice of the matter. But if you commit some extraordinary, outrageous, and startling murder, a number of benevolent persons are sure to insist that such a crime could only have been committed by a madman, and the criminal will get off on the ground of his assumed insanity and will only be relegated to an asylum for the insane during what is formally called the pleasure of the Sovereign. A late eminent judge, who according to Carlyle's phrase "had swallowed formulas," once said that a man in England who wanted to commit a murder had only to kill his victim and then announce

himself as the Emperor of China in order to escape the penalty of death and be relegated to the comparative comfort of a lunatic asylum. It is not necessary here to go into the question whether or not the death penalty ought or ought not to be abolished altogether. It is so abolished in some countries of Europe and in some States of the American Republic; and the argument is still going on as to the effect of abolition on the increase or the decrease of crime. It is perfectly certain that while the death penalty was enacted for all manner of minor offences the offences did not decrease in number. How far the teaching of this evidence may be practically pushed, and whether the death penalty has in any cases the effect of diminishing the general average of crime, is a question which to this day occupies the serious attention of philanthropists and law reformers everywhere.

But as the number of executions grew less and less there naturally arose the question, what to do with the criminals whom we did not get rid of by the gallows. For a long time we had a convenient and easy way of disposing of the criminals whom we thought not bad enough to be put to death and not good enough to be allowed to live, even in prisons, amongst us. There were the Colonies—what more convenient places could there be to shoot our human rubbish into? Therefore, so early as the days of Charles II., the system of transportation was invented and employed for the purpose of getting our lesser criminals quietly out of our way. Once they were removed out of sight of our shores public opinion here for a long time troubled itself but little about

them. At one period we sent a good many of our criminals, men and women, off to Virginia or some other of our American Colonies. The readers of Daniel Defoe, and, much later still, of Charles Reade, will know something about the working of that system. The American Colonies, however, soon raised an outcry against this method of populating their land. They did not want Moll Flanders or any of her pals and comrades to settle on their soil. They insisted that places like Virginia, for instance, were made for better purposes than to become the outlying prison-grounds for the scum of our criminal population. In due course of time the uprising of the American Colonies, the War of Independence, and the establishment of the United States, settled the whole question so far as that part of our Colonial Empire was concerned. But we had other colonies still to fall back upon, and in 1787 we made the experiment of sending a cargo of criminals out to Botany Bay, on the eastern shore of New South Wales. We repeated the experiment again and again, and we also began to send our exiled fellow-subjects to Van Dieman's Land, or Tasmania as it is now called, and to Norfolk Island—a lonely island in the Pacific Ocean, some eight hundred miles from the shore of New South Wales. Norfolk Island, however, had a worse destiny in store for her than to be the receptacle of our exported criminals. Norfolk Island became, in fact, the penal settlement of a penal settlement. In other words, those among our criminals who made themselves by fresh crimes intolerable to the community of New South Wales,

were despatched, as a still further punishment for their offences, to take their lodgment in Norfolk Island. The imagination of man can hardly conceive a condition of things more horrible and loathsome than that engendered thus in Norfolk Island.

A cargo of wretches was sent out to New South Wales, and out of these several, after landing there, committed fresh crimes, and were therefore deported to Norfolk Island. It is not left altogether to our imagination to picture what was the state of things which began to prevail in this penal settlement of a penal settlement. The indefatigable philanthropists of Great Britain and Ireland began to rouse public opinion at home to some sense of the horrors of the whole system. By this time we had got a reformed House of Commons and something like a system of popular representation. The House of Commons in 1837 accepted a motion for the appointment of a committee to consider our whole system of transportation. We find some illustrious and many eminent names on the list of that committee; Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell were among its members, and so were Mr. Charles Buller, Sir William Molesworth, one of the small party known as philosophical Radicals, and Lord Howick, who afterwards succeeded his father as Earl Grey. The committee made a report, which proved to be one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most startling and shocking reports ever submitted to the House of Commons. If it had been generally read at the time it must have aroused public feeling to such an extent as to make an instant reform of the

whole transportation system unavoidable. But the public in general do not read Blue Books, as they are called, and it took much energy and patience on the part of philanthropic reformers before they could succeed in arousing public attention to the horrors of Norfolk Island and of New South Wales. In Norfolk Island the population was almost altogether composed of the prison officials and of those outcasts of the outcasts, the transported criminals who were found unendurable in New South Wales and were sent to the deeper depths of the settlement in Norfolk Island. Order there was only maintained by the lash ; the men worked in chains ; they were roused from their sleep at daylight, sent to the fields to work in their fetters, and driven back to their dens at night. One can easily understand what utter brutes, brutish indeed far below what we usually call the brute creation, these men soon became under such a system. One of these unfortunate wretches said to a magistrate before whom he was brought for further punishment, "Let a man be what he will when he comes out here, he is soon as bad as all the rest ; the heart of a man is taken from him and there is given to him instead the heart of a beast." It was a life of perpetual profligacy, perpetual quarrelling, and perpetual flogging. The gaolers who had these wretched creatures in charge soon ceased to regard them as human beings, and treated them as if they were brutes of the most senseless order, amenable to no discipline but that of the lash.

This, of course, was the worst illustration of the whole system ; but in New South Wales, although

the condition of things was modified by the fact that the convicts were living among a civilised population, yet the effect of their presence created a social horror such as civilisation had hardly seen before. When the convicts arrived in the colony they were subjected to a certain period of penal discipline, and then were turned loose among the civilised and respectable inhabitants. Each convict, after he had served an appointed time, received what may be called a ticket-of-leave, which allowed him to obtain domestic employment among the settlers. The convicts were free to hire themselves out as workers or domestic servants to the colonists ; and to maintain themselves by their wages. A settler who wanted agricultural labourers or artisans or domestic servants, had only to apply to the local authorities in order to obtain the services of whatever number of convicts he desired to have. Women convicts as well as men were disposed of in this way. Therefore in such a town as Sydney, which, although not the great city it is now, was even then a busy and a thriving place, convict labour was a regular social institution. Men and women were going about every day in the ordinary life of Sydney, working in trades, in business, in gardens, on the fields, and in indoor domestic service, to all appearance like the working class of any European city ; but there was a ghastly difference. To begin with, the workers were criminals who did not as a rule even profess to be reclaimed ; and in the next instance they had to be kept in something like order just as slaves were on the plantations of Georgia or Tennessee in the old days,

by the frequent application of the lash. The whole system was, in fact, one of slavery in a new form. The local magistrates had the power, on the complaint of any master or mistress, to order a man to be flogged with as many as fifty lashes, for any disobedience of orders or any breach of discipline. Men were flogged for threatening a fellow-worker, for neglecting to groom a horse, for failing to keep a carriage or a cart clean or in proper order, for any act that showed an insubordinate spirit, or even a negligence in attending to their duties. The magistrates in most cases, if not in all, would naturally be inclined to sympathise with masters and mistresses; and, indeed, one can imagine a magistrate at that time asking himself what else was to be done but to terrify such creatures into obedience by the liberal use of the lash, since the Mother Country had thought fit to send their cargoes of convicts over to the colony. Therefore, in point of fact, the masters and mistresses could have their convicts flogged as often as they thought fit. The only restriction put on any magistrate was the rule that he must not adjudicate in his own case—that is, he must not sit on the bench and try his own convict labourer and order the labourer to be flogged. But it need hardly be said that no magistrate found the slightest difficulty, when he made a complaint against a convict servant, in getting some other magistrate to decide the case in his favour, and order the accused man to be flogged. Many Englishwomen, whose husbands had been convicted and transported to New South Wales, went out and settled in the colony; set up

some business or some farming work of their own, and had their husbands assigned to them as farm labourers or as domestic servants. It would seem an incredible story, but it is told in the cold black and white of the Parliamentary Report, that in some instances, not a few, the wives, possibly smarting under the sense of old injuries, took advantage of the opportunity to have their husbands flogged. The women convicts in the colony almost all went utterly and hopelessly to the bad; they probably reasoned, if they argued the matter out at all, that society offered them no chance of reclamation, that they could not be much worse off than they were, and that they could do nothing better than to get hold of a little money by theft or in other ways, and so supply themselves with tea and sugar—great luxuries at that time in the Australian settlements —or with intoxicating drinks.

In the town of Sydney there were three distinct orders of population, brought together in a closeness of propinquity such as no European city could show. There were the respectable settlers, the owners of land, the owners of cattle and sheep, the shopkeepers and traders of all kinds; there were their farm workers and domestic servants, the convict men and women whose presence no community in England would endure; and then there were the blacks, as the native population were called, who used to flock into the streets of Sydney very much as the Red Indians used to stream into the western cities of America. The black fellows, as they were commonly called, used to bring their wives into the town, and

sell them to the convicts for a drink of rum or a piece of tobacco. The convicts in their turn soon infected the poor natives with the basest crimes belonging to the scum of great English cities. The colonists, naturally, were the first to complain of the loathsome conditions which civilisation in the Mother Country had thought fit to impose on them. It may seem hard to believe now, but it is none the less true, that some English champions of the abominable transportation system, actually accused the colonists of ingratitude because they had complained of the efforts we were making to improve them. It was pointed out by many of these orators in the House of Commons that the whole transportation system was got up for the benefit of the Colonies themselves, and in order to supply them with cheap labour. Indeed, the Act of Charles II. especially set forth that the object of the new system was to supply the Colonies with labour at a cheap rate. The Colonies, however, did not seem to see things in just that light. They complained bitterly that their towns and their lands were contaminated and corrupted by this constant infusion of the scoundrelism of the Mother Country into their peaceful settlements. When the gold mines were discovered in Australia it began to be evident that the transportation system would have to undergo some change. No advocate of that system who happened to be in possession of his senses could well affirm that it would be a judicious thing to send cargo after cargo of gaol-birds out to a country where the discovery of gold lent a new temptation to crime. Yet it is surprising to recall to mind how long our

philanthropists here at home, and the colonists across the ocean, had to argue and to agitate before the conscience of England could be thoroughly awakened to the abomination of the whole system. Even when it was shown that such a colony as New South Wales would have nothing more to do with our felons and our gaol-birds, English law-makers still thought that the system would be good enough, at all events, for Western Australia. Once the experiment was tried of sending a cargo of convicts to the Cape of Good Hope; but the Cape Colonists absolutely refused to allow them to be landed; and the Cape Colonists then, as now, were sturdy folk, and the experiment was not pressed and was never repeated.

The transportation system was therefore practically at an end. But then another question arose—what is to be done with the convicts whom we cannot put to death and whom we are no longer allowed to transport? The authorities at home still had their eyes fixed on Western Australia as a place to which, in case of necessity, some of the very worst of our criminal classes might still be despatched; and, in fact, several successive Acts of Parliament dealing with the whole convict system still retained provisions by means of which any convicts who could not possibly be kept in order at home, might be shipped off as a present to the inhabitants of Western Australia. This idea, too, had to be given up in the end; but it is necessary to bear in mind that for some time to come the possibility of its being put into practice made an element in all our legislation dealing with the convicts. The first great change

which the Government adopted was to introduce what was called the ticket-of-leave system. Now the ticket-of-leave system was itself borrowed from the practice of the Colonies to which we had been in the habit of sending out our shiploads of scoundrelism. We have just seen that in New South Wales, for example, a convict man or woman could obtain, after having served a certain number of years of actual prison punishment, a ticket-of-leave which permitted the bearer to go about freely in civil life, and to obtain employment wherever, within the limits of the colony, employment was to be had. An Act of Parliament was passed in England which enabled all convicts here, after having served a certain number of years in prison, to obtain a ticket-of-leave and to go about and look for work anywhere in Great Britain and Ireland. It is curious and interesting to notice how differently the new practice worked in Great Britain and Ireland. In both countries the ticket-of-leave man was still held under the observation of the police and had to report himself at certain stated intervals, and to show that at all events he had committed no new crimes. If he had committed any new crime his ticket-of-leave was of course revoked, and he was captured and sent to trial like any ordinary offender. But the system worked quite differently in Great Britain and in Ireland, because the authorities in the two islands interpreted the principle of the Act in quite different ways. In Great Britain, for some reason which it seems hardly possible to understand, the Act was supposed to mean that after a certain time of prison detention

any convict who had not committed any gross violation of prison discipline, or misbehaved himself in some outrageous fashion, was entitled to demand a ticket-of-leave and to get it as a matter of course. An English Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, actually told the House of Commons that there could not be a greater mistake than to suppose that the ticket-of-leave was meant as a reward for good conduct or was intended to be, in any sense whatever, a certificate of good conduct. In any ordinary case, Sir George Grey explained, the convicts, unless they had transgressed the prison rules and acted in such a manner as to incur an unfavourable report from the prison authorities, were, after a stated period of imprisonment, entitled as a matter of course to a ticket-of-leave. Nothing could be more clear than this explanation, and nothing could have foreshadowed more correctly the utter failure of such a system founded on such a principle. In fact it has been well observed the ticket-of-leave system at first got no fair chance in England at all. Sir George Grey's interpretation of the Act merely meant that year after year a gang of miscreants, whom the judges had sentenced to terms of imprisonment for many years, were to be turned loose upon society without having given the slightest evidence that they were reclaimed or that they wanted to be reclaimed. They had only to take care that during the actual term of their imprisonment they did not grossly violate any of the prison rules. In England too it was held by the authorities that it would be unfair to the interesting criminal, now turned adrift upon

society, and might interfere with his chances of getting a decent employment, if it were known that he was still under the supervision of the police. The police were considerately recommended by the authorities to be very cautious about admitting any previous knowledge of a ticket-of-leave man's character. Therefore if the police came to know that some incorrigible scoundrel, just turned loose from gaol, was seeking employment, say as a gardener in a quiet suburban household, they were not by any means to give the slightest hint as to the man's previous career, lest it might deter the quiet householder from giving him instant employment. What happened is, of course, what every one who was not a Home Secretary must easily have anticipated. Of those who were thus turned loose with a ticket-of-leave, at least fifty per cent. committed new crimes and were convicted over again. The temptation was too great. Somebody of the character of Charles Dickens' Bill Sikes obtained employment in the service of our quiet householder, the quiet householder not having the slightest idea as to the antecedents of the man he was employing, and Mr. Sikes, no doubt, being liberally furnished with forged certificates of character. About seventy per cent. of the ticket-of-leave men relapsed altogether into their old courses within the first year of their freedom from the prison. The writer of this book heard the late Baron Bramwell, one of our greatest judges, declare from the Bench that there were instances within his own knowledge of criminals coming before him who had already three sentences, one overlapping the other.

The convict obtained his ticket-of-leave, got som decent employment, committed a new crime, was tried and sent to prison again, and after the usual period of probation came out again a free man, and soon committed a new crime, and so on. The literature and the drama of that time run over with allusions to the ticket-of-leave man and his goings-on. In fact, to a certain extent the new system worked badly for some of the unfortunate ticket-of-leave men themselves. Public opinion became so inflamed with horror against the whole system, that the mere fact of a man's having or having had a ticket-of-leave, was assumed to brand him as an irreclaimable scoundrel. A drama, once very popular, and played sometimes on our stage even yet, had for its central idea that of a man originally convicted on false testimony, and who, on his release from prison, was all but hunted out of society because it was discovered or alleged that he held a ticket-of-leave. The whole subject became the great outcry of the day; and Committee after Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into it.

Now, in Ireland, the ticket-of-leave system was worked with the most complete success. It was so worked as to satisfy the most ardent expectations of those who from the first had believed in it. Why was this? Simply because the Act was interpreted by the authorities in Ireland exactly as almost every reader of this volume would interpret it now if it came before him as a novelty to be put to the test. The Chairman of the Board of Prison Directors in Ireland, a man of positive genius in his sphere of

work, construed the Act precisely as the very conditions endorsed on the ticket-of-leave might have told any one that it ought to be construed. In Ireland, the convicts were kept at first in a penal establishment, all to themselves, not far from Dublin. They were put to hard and monotonous work; but they were encouraged from the very first to believe they could gradually obtain some relaxation of their rigid discipline, and later on even some small rewards for good conduct, and that after their term of probation they would get their conditional release, provided that they had satisfied the prison authorities that they had deserved and were fit for freedom. Even when they got their ticket-of-leave, however, they had to report themselves at stated intervals to the police; and they knew very well that if they were found to be falling back to their old associates and their old ways, they would most certainly be sent back to the penal settlement, and have to begin their dreary labour once again. In fact, they were put through a strictly reformatory system; and the result in most cases was a genuine and enduring reform. The men knew that without such a reform they could not obtain or keep their freedom; but they knew also that with such a reform they had the means of an honourable living once more put within their reach. So well did the system work in Ireland, that a man at large who had Sir Walter Crofton's ticket-of-leave, was known by that very fact to have given substantial proof of good purpose and improved character; and the ticket-of-leave, which was regarded as a badge of scoundrelism in

England, was a good character testimonial in Ireland and enabled a man to find decent employment almost as soon as he sought for it. Of course it has to be taken into account that there was far less temptation to a man striving to be reclaimed in a small Irish community than there would be in a vast place like London, where whole districts engendered and maintained their criminal populations. Still the fact remains that the system worked well in Ireland, and worked badly, or for its one especial purpose did not work at all in England. Since that time the authorities have been trying all manner of modifications of the penal servitude system, and as yet the great question, how to reform our criminals, remains unsolved. But we have got many degrees, indeed, nearer to its solution since the days when the convict ship still floated in our harbours to carry off our felons to servitude in the Colonies.

Our punishments have become humanised by education, by the efforts of philanthropy, and by the spread of religion, until, at all events, there is now no longer any excuse left for the kind of morbid sympathy which many were compelled to feel with the condemned criminals of some generations back. The death sentences which used to be passed on men convicted of political offences have become mere forms in our time. Some of us can well remember when Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, and other men of the highest personal character, were sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, for attempting insurrection in 1848. There

is at present an Irish Nationalist Member of the House of Commons, as much respected as any man in that House, who was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, for the part he took in the Fenian movement of 1867. In the case of Smith O'Brien and Meagher the sentence was mitigated to one of transportation while the transportation system still existed ; and Smith O'Brien, before the close of his life, was allowed to return to his native country. In the case of the Irish Member of Parliament of whom we have spoken, and who was the last man ever sentenced to the antiquated and horrible doom of hanging, drawing and quartering, the condemned man was allowed, in consideration of the humanity he had shown towards some captured policemen, to exile himself for a time from his native land, and after that time to return to these countries. Another of the Fenian leaders convicted and sentenced to death was the late John Boyle O'Reilly, who was actually transported in chains to Western Australia, from which he contrived to make his escape to the United States, and who became afterwards one of the most distinguished men in the city of Boston ; the friend of such men as Emerson and Longfellow and Wendell Phillips. Another of those convicted at the time of the Fenian movement is Mr. Michael Davitt, who, after having served years and years of imprisonment, is now a member of Parliament, and one of whose speeches received the enthusiastic commendation of Mr. Gladstone. The manner of treating political prisoners has lately, once again, been the subject of much public discussion in England ; and

the question has yet to be settled whether it is either wise or just to subject political offenders, men of stainless character, to whose unselfish purpose their bitterest enemies pay tribute, to herd for years with the basest of criminals, and to undergo the most terrible drudgery of prison labour. No doubt the question will soon be solved on the principle of leniency, or, to speak more properly, on the principle which recognises the justice of distinguishing between one offender and another, between the enthusiast who breaks the law in support of what he believes to be an honest political cause, and the common burglar and garrotter. Indeed, there is at present another serious question much discussed in England—the question whether even our basest criminals who are not sent to the gallows are not still, in many instances, subjected to a sort of prison discipline which only tends to make their natures more and more brutal. Some distinguished men, some of our criminal judges of the minor order, are strongly in favour of a system of short sentences, carried out with rigour indeed; but without the more brutalising accompaniments which our prison discipline still recognises and allows. It has to be remembered that since the days when the convict system was finally abolished, and when even the idea of turning Western Australia to account for that purpose had to be absolutely abandoned, we have had for the first time a great system of national and compulsory education put into force throughout Great Britain and Ireland. With the spread of that education, and with the movement going on everywhere in these countries for the improvement of the

working classes and the poor generally, it is surely not too much to expect that the baser kinds of crime will grow fewer and fewer, and that there may be less occasion for the rigours of that penal discipline which to so many enlightened observers seems far too rigorous even still. One thing, at all events, may be taken as certain—we shall never again go back to the transportation system. The report of the Committee which sat in 1837 settled that question for ever, even although few observers at the time had the least idea of what the effect of its publication must be. That report turned what the late Charles Reade, the novelist, used to call "the bull's-eye of publicity," on that particular department of our penal system; and it was certain that the English public had only to understand the question thoroughly in order to come to one decision. It took a long time to bring about that final decision. Again and again some belated public man made a stand for the old system of the convict ship; and there were many feeble-minded legislators who went so far at least in favour of the old practice as to ask pathetically what we were to do with our gaol-birds if we were no longer allowed to send them to any of our colonies or dependencies. But the certain fact is that the report of the Committee gave the system a wound from which it never recovered, from which it bled to death. One of the great reforms made since that time—a reform which has done much to facilitate our dealings with crime—was the thorough organisation and development of the police system in our towns and cities, and, indeed, every-

where over these countries. Sir Robert Peel was the first statesman who gave to London a genuine police force. Before his time there had been nothing but a pitifully inefficient organisation of what were called watchmen, who were the butt and the sport of our satirists from generation to generation. Peel gave to London a real police force; and that force became the model for all the cities of the three kingdoms, and for the country places as well. The great municipal corporations of England and Scotland now, for the most part, retain the control of their own police; and it therefore comes within the powers of the citizens themselves to see that the force is properly kept up to the level of its duty, that it is an effective machine for the protection of life and property, and for the capture of evil-doers. In Ireland the system is somewhat different, for there the police in general form a sort of semi-military body, kept on the watch to deal with political and agrarian disturbances, and under the direct control of the Crown. It may be hoped, however, that the time is not far distant when the police force of Ireland too may become a purely civil organisation under the control of the municipal authorities of the country.

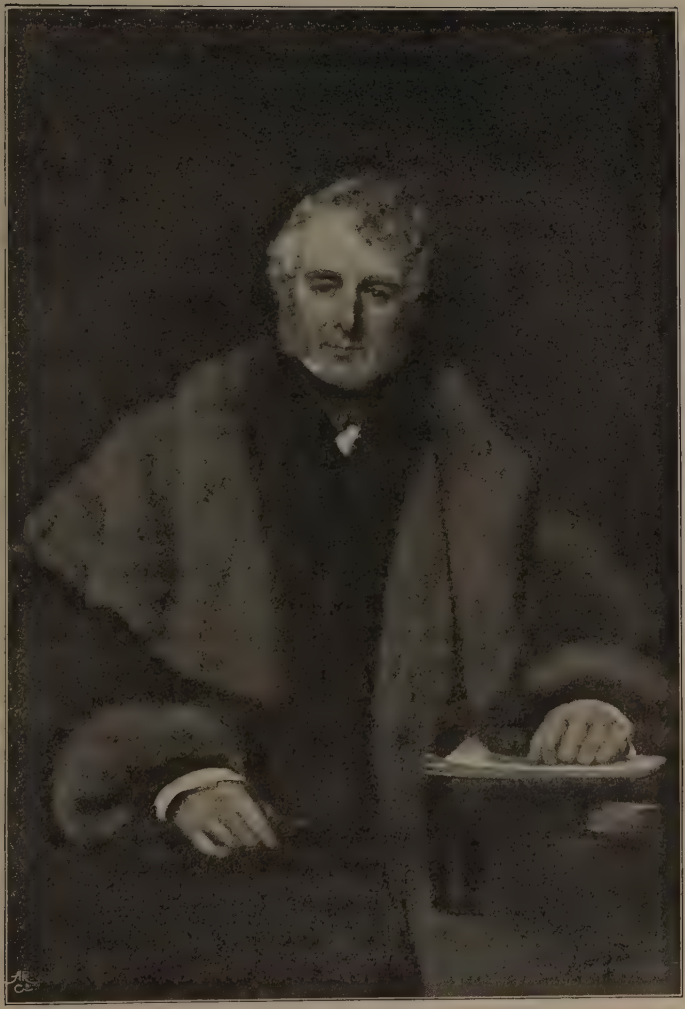
We have taken our readers a good deal in advance of the actual time with which this chapter began. But it seemed inconvenient to distract the attention of the reader by dividing the abolition of the transportation system into its separate stages, and taking each according to the date of its accomplishment. The great epoch in the reform was the appointment of the Committee of 1837; all the rest followed from

that, and may be considered a part of the same movement. A formal account of the several Committees which Parliament appointed since that time to deal with the same general subject, and of the statutes which were passed to bring about this or that modification of each already modified system, would prove but dry and lifeless reading. As we have already shown the movement is not at its end; and indeed, so long as civilisation goes on broadening and improving, it is certain that we shall have fresh demands made for alterations in our way of dealing with our criminals. Whole shelves of books have been filled since 1837 with the writings of men who have made the question a life-study, on the causes of crime, physical and moral; the incitements to crime coming from social conditions; the criminal himself; and the best means of diminishing crime and bringing the criminal under the influence of education and of religion. But it may be safely taken for granted that there will be no reaction towards the system that sought to terrorise by cruelty, and which seemed sometimes to believe that a man could be made better by forcing into stronger development all the lowest and basest moods and passions of his nature. Those who were regarded as the philanthropic dreamers of 1837 might seem perhaps to have been but modest and cautious reformers when put in comparison with some who are regarded as the dreamers of to-day.

II

TITHES AND STATE CHURCH IN IRELAND

THE conditions of Ireland soon began to be a fresh source of disappointment to all the easy-minded persons who are fond of the belief that when a Government has taken one step on the path of reform it ought to be thereby relieved from the trouble of taking any further step in the same direction. "What do these discontented Irishmen want?" it was angrily asked. Ireland demanded Catholic Emancipation; and prevailed upon the English Government, partly by argument and partly by threats, to grant that emancipation, and yet Ireland is not happy. We read of disturbances going on every day in that ungrateful country; we hear of riots, of conflicts with the police authorities; of resistance to the payment of tithes; and it seems to us—so these easy-going people argued—that the Government might as well in the beginning have taken the stand which was recommended by so sound and enlightened a statesman as Lord Eldon, and refused to give to such a thankless nation any instalment whatever of justice. This is indeed the kind of argument which is repeated



LORD MELBOURNE.

1779–1848.

TORONTO
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again and again at every great political crisis, and whenever any social or political reform is demanded. It is quite certain that the emancipation of the Catholics had not so satisfied the people of Ireland as to make them put up with every existing political grievance to the end of time. The question which was now creating so much commotion in Ireland was that which concerned the levying of tithes; and the barest statement of the principle and the working of the tithe system will satisfy every intelligent reader of the present day that no people on earth would have endured it for a moment longer than mere physical compulsion could make them.

The tithe system was denounced, indeed, strongly and passionately by leading Irishmen; but it never was denounced more bitterly than by such English writers as Sydney Smith and Lord Macaulay. Sydney Smith said of the whole system that there was nothing like it in any civilised country with which we were acquainted, and that nothing we knew of the internal condition of Timbuctoo warranted us in supposing that it could exist even there. The principle of the tithes was one which it would be only possible to maintain in a country where one religion, and one alone, prevailed amongst the whole population. In Ireland there were then between six and seven millions of a Catholic population who had nothing to do with the State Church—of men and women who had never entered, and never would enter, the doors of a Protestant place of worship. On the other side there was the State Church, with its four archbishops, its eighteen bishops, and a law

which authorised its clergy to draw an important part of their income, by force if needs be, and force was the common means of obtaining it, from that same Irish population. Ireland was then, and indeed even still is, a country depending mainly upon agriculture for its support. The tithe came upon the smallest farmer as well as upon the richest landowner; and the smallest farmer had to make his regular contribution towards the maintenance of the clergy of the Established Church. Often when a harvest failed—and a bad harvest was no uncommon calamity in a rainy country—the Irish tenant farmer found it hard enough to supply his own family with the mere necessities of life; and it was not likely that he could be in quite a contented and loyal mood when the tithe collector came round to exact a contribution towards the support of the Protestant clergy with whose ministrations the Catholic farmer had nothing to do. The whole Protestant population of Ireland numbered little more than three-quarters of a million of persons; with the State Church set up and endowed for their especial benefit, and the additional right to extort contributions for the support of their clergy from the six and a half millions of Catholics by whom the mere presence of an endowed State Church was regarded as a grievance and an insult. It might have been thought that any one with capacity enough to look calmly into the whole question must have seen that to maintain such a system for long would be absolutely incompatible with the growth of civilisation. Our wonder is now how any human being with two ideas in his head could even

then, even amid all the tumult of conflicting partisanship, have formed any other opinion. It was as absurd to expect that the Irish Catholics would put up with the tithe system because they had been allowed to send representatives into the House of Commons as it would be to expect that a prisoner in a cell should make no complaint if deprived of his dinner, because he was reminded that he had been conceded some food for his breakfast. The plain and practical truth is that reform of necessity leads to reform; that you cannot admit a man to have any one right without expecting that he will claim in time other rights as well. Despotism can be maintained so long as there is force to maintain it, but the trouble which haunts the despot is that there is never force enough to maintain it for long. Lord Eldon's principles might be logical enough, but they had the considerable disadvantage that it was wholly impossible to maintain them in action. Even of the Liberals in England, only the most advanced were enlightened enough to see that the chapter of reform once opened could not be closed at will. The struggle to maintain and to resist the tithe system was convulsing the whole of Ireland. The strong arm of the law, as it was called, had constantly to be invoked in order to enable the Protestant clergy to get in their tithes from the Catholic farmers and cottagers. In some districts every farm was the scene of a periodical fight between the police and the peasantry. Numbers of lives were lost each year in that way; the authorities fought for what they considered the proper enforcement of the law; the peasantry fought for

dear life—that is, for the means of living. Sydney Smith declared that the enforcement of the tithe system in Ireland must have cost ten thousand lives. Then again, the bitterest hatreds were engendered between creed and creed, between class and class. Many of the Protestant clergymen, who were regarded by their victimised Catholic fellow-subjects as bloated and over-fed oppressors of the poor, were living in a state hardly above the meanest poverty, and themselves regarded with loathing the system which compelled them to extort a means of living from half-starving Irish cottagers who never crossed the threshold of a Protestant church. One Protestant prelate, the Archbishop of Dublin, who gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords on the subject of the tithe system, declared that he spoke for himself and for many of his clerical brethren when he declared that, "as for the continuance of the tithe system, it seems to me that it must be at the point of the bayonet—that it must be through a sort of chronic civil war." The Archbishop went on to say that "the ill-feelings which have so long existed against it have been embodied in so organised a combination that I conceive that there would be continual breakings-out of resistance which must be kept down by a continuance of very severe measures such as the Government might, indeed, resolve to have recourse to for once if necessary, but would be very unwilling to resort to habitually so as to keep the country under military government; and the most intelligent persons and the most experienced I have conversed with, seem to think that nothing else will

permanently secure the payment of tithes under the present system." The words of the Archbishop contained for the most part nothing but sound sense and truth. Resistance to the payment of tithes in Ireland had, indeed, become so thoroughly and actively organised that it could be stamped out only by the sort of force which stamps out a rebellion. The combination was quite natural and obvious, and indeed a matter of necessity. It did not require any secret association or any military drilling. A set of agricultural workers, who were threatened with military force to compel them to pay the tithes, would be only too ready to join with some neighbouring group of agriculturists to help them in resisting the armed invasion of the tithe collectors. But the Archbishop of Dublin, who had said so much that was sound and true, did not seem to have asked himself whether the suggested alternative was possible. He gave it as the opinion of the most intelligent and experienced persons, that the tithe system could not be maintained except at the point of the bayonet, and by putting the whole country under the absolute dominion of martial law. He did not, however, appear to have considered whether there was any possibility of maintaining a system of martial law for such a purpose. Would it be possible in an age of civilisation to put the second island of the United Kingdom under martial law, merely in order that six and a half millions of Catholics should be compelled to contribute to the support of the clergy who ministered to the religious wants of three-quarters of a million? One might have thought that the Duke of

Wellington, when he gave his reluctant assent to the passing of Catholic Emancipation, had already answered that question. Wellington gave in because he did not believe that it would be possible to maintain the system of religious exclusion without running the risk of civil war, and because he did not believe it certain that civil war itself would answer the purpose in the end. The very same argument might be applied to the maintenance of the tithe system. Then, again, it has to be remembered that the manner in which Catholic Emancipation had at last been conceded was not likely to fill the Irish people with warm feelings of gratitude, or to make them particularly reluctant about entering on a new agitation in furtherance of a fresh and a rightful claim. If Catholic Emancipation had been granted as an act of justice, as the concession of a rightful claim, there might have been reason to expect enduring gratitude from the Irish people; although, even then, it could not fairly be said that gratitude for the concession of one rightful claim could pledge any people never to ask for the recognition of any other rightful claim. To add to all the other inconveniences of the tithe system, it has to be stated that the tithes were not simple in their imposition but were highly complex. It was not the case of one person alone coming to the tenant farmer to insist on the payment of tithes. There were several different kinds of tithes; and many claimants, whose claims were legally antagonistic to each other, all came down at once or at rapid intervals on the unfortunate farmer, and all demanded a settlement. The farmer, even if he had been able and

willing to pay the amount to which he was legally liable, could not always tell which was the particular claim answering to that description, and thus he was often perplexed and harassed beyond endurance. At last it became necessary for the Government, which was then Whig, or what would now be called Liberal, to do something towards the removal of this terrible cause of disturbance and disaffection in Ireland. There could be no doubt that the exaction of tithes and the desperate struggle to resist their exaction had brought Ireland, to adopt certain memorable words used by Mr. Gladstone many years after, "within a measurable distance of civil war." No one could possibly pretend to justify the violent deeds which were done at that time at various places all over the country; but, on the other hand, no one who studies the history of the tithe agitation can pretend to be surprised that violent and horrible deeds were sometimes done by the maddened Irish peasantry.

At last the Ministry appeared to have made up their minds to do something; and the Royal Speech at the opening of a parliamentary session requested Parliament to consider whether some improvement could not be made in the laws relating to the imposition and the collection of tithes in Ireland. Now, this was a necessary step at the opening of a question of such grave importance; but it had none the less the momentary effect of encouraging the refusal of the Irish farmers and peasants to pay the tithes at all. Any one who considers the subject calmly for a moment will understand the meaning

of this. Up to that time Governments had steadily refused to deal with the tithe question; and had simply held to the principle that the law of the land had given to the clergy of the State Church the right of the tithes, and that the clergy were, therefore, quite justified in enforcing their payment even at the point of the bayonet. To read some of the speeches made and the letters written by Tory public men, and even by some Whig public men, at the time, one might fancy that a law passed by Parliament could never be repealed, and that no such thing as a change for the better was possible to the legislation of the State. But the moment the Royal Speech invited Parliament to consider some method of dealing satisfactorily with the tithe question, that moment it became apparent to the Irish peasantry that a reform of the whole system was only a matter of time. Now, of course, it would have been a more patient and more philosophical policy on the part of the Irish peasantry, to endeavour to pay up the tithes in the meanwhile and wait for the coming of the better time foreshadowed in the words of the Sovereign. But reasonable persons do not expect patience and philosophy to be the guiding virtues of a half-starving population; and it cannot be doubted that the Irish peasantry caught at the encouragement given to them; and became more unwilling than ever to contribute the tithes from which they saw that sooner or later they were to be to some extent exempted. So the resistance went on, and there were the usual deeds of violence and the usual prosecutions, and O'Connell was fiercely denounced

by Tory speakers and the Tory press, as if he, and not the iniquitous tithe system, were responsible for all the troubles. Committees were appointed by both Houses of Parliament to consider the whole subject; and the committees reported in substance, that no reform would be of any use which did not amount to a complete extinction of the tithes by commutation for a charge upon the land; in other words, which did not make the landowner responsible for the payment of the tithes and leave him to adjust the rents which he demanded from his tenants in accordance with the altered system.

In the meantime special attention should be directed to a momentous passage in a speech delivered by Lord Ebrington in the House of Commons. Lord Ebrington had himself been a member of the committee appointed by that House to consider the whole subject; and especial attention is directed to this part of his speech, inasmuch as it opened up a new and a wider question connected with the existence of a State Church in Ireland, and pointed out the one great injustice, the one deep grievance, which was involved in the whole system. Lord Ebrington declared, "that no plan could lead to a final settlement of the question which attempted to exclude the consideration of a thorough reform of the Irish State Church." Lord Ebrington said that when he saw the clergy of that Church receiving salaries so much out of proportion to the number of Protestants under their care, and when he saw that these salaries were paid chiefly by Roman Catholics, he could not but look upon the whole system as

pregnant with injury to the cause of religion. He protested against the number of Protestant clergy being so utterly disproportioned to the numbers of their congregations ; and he expressed a strong desire to see some more just distribution of the revenues of the Church, such as would afford a more adequate provision for the needs of the working clergy. He maintained that no settlement of the existing complaints could be satisfactory, which did not, while showing a due regard to all genuine interests, contemplate the reconstruction of the Church of Ireland in a condition better proportioned to the wants of the Protestant inhabitants. We have already mentioned, passingly and in round numbers, the disproportion between the Catholic population in Ireland and the Protestants of all denominations. It may be well, however, to set forth the precise facts of the case as they were brought out in a census specially taken for the instruction of Parliament on the subject. The Catholics, according to this official census, numbered six million four hundred and thirty-six thousand ; the congregations of the Established Church made up altogether eight hundred and fifty-three thousand ; and the Dissenters, six hundred and sixty-five thousand, five hundred. The Protestants of the Established Church were just about ten per cent. of the whole population ; and the Dissenters were eight per cent. The revenues of the Church amounted to eight hundred and sixty-five thousand five hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling, that is to say, rather more than £1 per head of its members. There were nearly fourteen hundred benefices, forty-

one of which did not contain a single Catholic; twenty benefices had less than five Catholics; and a hundred and sixty-five did not rise, each of them, to five-and-twenty Catholics. In a hundred and fifty-seven benefices no services whatever were performed, the incumbents being absentees who probably shrank from the odious task of collecting their tithes at the point of the bayonet, and kept away from the scene altogether. Four archbishops and eighteen bishops were appointed and endowed by the State to look after the spiritual concerns of the Protestants of Ireland. It would be impossible to add anything to the argument contained in these figures; they come with singular appropriateness after the citation which has been made from Lord Ebrington's memorable speech. The Parliamentary Committees, to one of which, as we have said, Lord Ebrington had been attached, had nothing to do with the broad consideration of the relations between the Irish State Church and the Irish people. The committees were merely appointed to consider whether anything could be done to improve the system of collecting the tithes. Lord Ebrington, in his speech, broadened the question beyond the understanding or the sympathy of many of those who listened to him. Time, however, made good every word that he had spoken. It would be impossible to settle the tithe question satisfactorily without considering whether the existence of so monstrous an anomaly as a State endowed and State established Protestant Church in a country such as Ireland, could co-exist with the progress of civilisation and the spread of Christianity. Lord Ebrington's

words bore fruit, but not at the time when they were spoken; it was left for a later day and for a statesman who began his life as a Tory to deal with that anomaly, and to abolish for ever that preposterous injustice. In the meantime the Government brought in several Bills for the modification of the tithe system. The substance of the propositions was that the responsibility for the tithes was to be transferred from the tenants to the landlords: and that money should be advanced by the Government for the help of the Protestant clergy who could not recover their tithes while the great resistance was going on. The Government, in the main, carried their propositions, which only amounted to a sort of temporary compromise all round.

One or two incidents of the controversy are worth noticing. We have already mentioned the system which is peculiar to the House of Lords, and by means of which a dissatisfied Peer is allowed to record his protest against the passing of a measure. The Duke of Cumberland, in this instance, recorded his protest on the ground that any measure dealing with the tithes of the Irish State Church was a violation of the Sovereign's Coronation Oath. That poor old Oath had been for some time forgotten, and now behold, it had come up again as a factor in the arrangements of the State. Another incident which is worth recalling would seem to say that the poor old King himself, although he gave the Royal Assent to all this legislation, had some conscientious struggle. During the course of the long debates the King's birthday came on, and the Irish bishops presented an

address to his Majesty on behalf of the Irish Protestant clergy, generally deprecating any interference in the existing arrangements of the Church. The King, in his reply, declared his resolve to stand up to the last in defence of the Church; and expressed a hope that no legislation might be introduced which could work any other way. He reminded his attentive and astonished hearers that he was completing his sixty-ninth year, and here the image of his approaching end brought big round tears into his eyes, and he said that he must be prepared to leave the world with a conscience clear in regard to the maintenance of the State Church. The threats, he said, of those who are enemies of the Church make it the more necessary for those who feel their duties to that Church to speak out. "The words which you hear from me are indeed spoken by the mouth, but they flow from my heart." Here, too, the tears flowed from the poor old King's eyes and ran down his Royal cheeks. It was an embarrassing sight for those who were round him; and must have been especially one of pity to those who already knew that he had signed whatever measures his Ministers presented to him all the same.

Perhaps with this touching scene we may begin to take our leave of William IV. This is not an abstract and brief chronicle of the rise and fall of Ministries or a minute account of the stages through which every effort of reform had to pass before it reached any point of advantage and was ready to start again. This is the story of England during the Nineteenth Century, and is best told in clear and

rapid outlines. Nothing of great historic moment happened during the remainder of the reign of William IV., except the passing of Lord John Russell's measure for a reform of the anomalous and grotesque condition of the Municipal Corporations. It is worth mentioning that one stage of the movement for reforming the Irish tithe system and the Irish Church, especially the "forward policy" advocated by Mr. Ward and Mr. Grote, both great reformers, cost to the Liberal Government the services of Lord Stanley, who found that his leader and his colleagues were going too far and too fast for him in the popular direction. Lord Stanley remained during the whole of his subsequent career a stout and steady Tory fighting off reform of any kind as long as he could resist it. He was, nevertheless, a man of extraordinary aptitude; with him, as Macaulay said, "the power of parliamentary debate seemed to be an instinct." He passed into the House of Lords, still as Lord Stanley, at a later period of his career, and finally was known there as Earl of Derby, and on the whole as the finest debater among the peers of his time. He had been called the Rupert of debate, and the phrase was happy and has clung to him since it was first applied. He always charged his foemen with the impetuosity and the courage of a very Prince Rupert; but he was seldom able to do more than win his own part of the battle, and the enemies held the ground in the end.

Lord Grey resigned office, and Sir Robert Peel came into power for a time, but another stage of the tithe question led to the fall of Sir Robert Peel's

Administration and the summoning to office of Lord Melbourne. Lord Melbourne was a man of a certain solid ability, and of some literary culture, who would have made a very respectable Prime Minister at a time when there was nothing particular to be done. He was easy-going; he objected to change of any kind; his familiar question to his colleagues was, "Why can't you let things alone?" In political life, however, things have a way of not consenting to be let alone, and Lord Melbourne, who had a particular dislike to being hurried, was only suited to be a kind of stop-gap in the movement of legislation.

Sir Robert Peel still had by far the greater part of his career before him, and he was a statesman and a man of genius. For the most part the remaining years of the reign were passed in more or less futile and sometimes feeble efforts of the Whig party to push forward reforms of various kinds, and of the Tory party to defeat, or, at least, to weaken or delay them. The Whig party began to fall out of consideration with the country. The popular movement was too strong for them. The breath of thought and of intellect all over the country blew upon them to as little purpose as the common wind might blow on a waterlogged and dismasted vessel. Many men inside the House of Commons, and out of it, began openly to profess themselves disgusted with the good-for-nothing action of the Whigs. Men like Lord Grey's impetuous son-in-law, Lord Durham, had no patience with the leaders of the party. People were asking themselves everywhere why Ministers called themselves Whigs and what possible connection their

policy had with that of Charles James Fox and his companions. The name of Whig was for the time associated, as it came to be once again associated in later days, with the idea of feebleness and half-heartedness, until at last it began to be openly declared that a Whig Minister was only a man who had got himself into office in order to shelter himself behind the Tories.

Then, at last, came the year 1837 ; and the public soon began to learn that the reign of William IV. was near its close. At the opening of 1837 the King's family could not but see that his strength was giving way. He had had very good health, as a rule, since his accession to the throne ; but now, those who were closely around him had the conviction forced upon them that a sudden change for the worst was taking place. He was upwards of seventy years of age, and although that does not seem a very advanced period of life as the lives of men are measured in our day, yet it certainly is a period at which the recovering force and the repair of tissue are not much to be expected, and when a sudden falling off is likely to lead to a complete falling away. It was noticed that on the 17th of May, when returning from London to Windsor, he had much difficulty in ascending the stairs and had to sit down and take rest by the way. As the days went on he lost appetite and became subject to fainting fits. When he was able to hold a Council he had to be wheeled into the Council Chamber in an arm-chair, as his power of walking had almost entirely gone—a dismal change from the manner in which he used to tramp about London shortly after his

accession to the throne. The King was entirely aware that his condition was dangerous; and he bore himself with patience and with courage. He expressed a strong wish to live for some time yet; and murmured his belief that as the next heir to the throne, the Princess Victoria, was still very young, it might be better if his life were prolonged for a few years more. Indeed, the poor old King had begun to regard his own existence as of infinite moment to the safety of the country, and there was something very touching in the evident sincerity with which he made known that conviction. He talked freely on various subjects, especially about the great naval victories of England, the anniversary of one or two of which happened to come up during the later days of his illness. There was no subject which gave him more delight than that of England's triumphs on the deep; and he might have been another Nelson, or at least another Cochrane, from the manner in which he threw his whole soul and spirit into association with some of the great victories over the French. He consulted with his Ministers whenever he could, and he signed a State paper every now and then when his trembling fingers allowed him to hold a pen. It is a fact to be remembered that the very last State paper he ever signed was the pardon of a condemned criminal. Even a great sovereign could not, perhaps, have closed his life with a more touching expression of sovereignty. The last words which were heard from his lips, on the night of the 19th of May, were addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and simply said, "Believe me, I am a religious man."

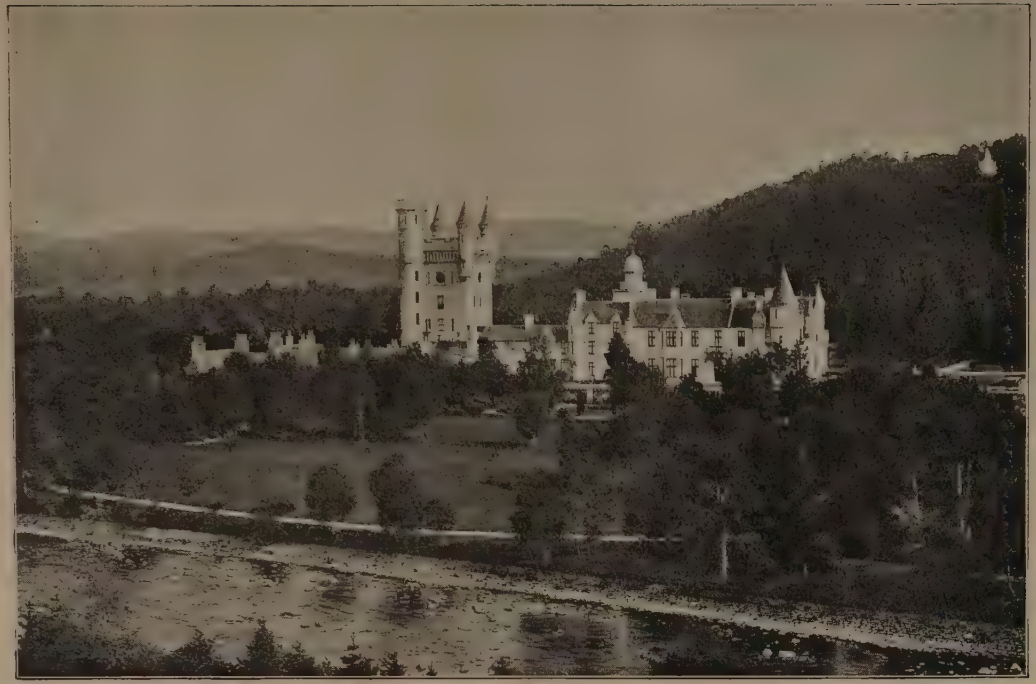
It would be unjust and even cruel to deny that the King was a religious man according to his lights, but his lights were many times sadly blurred by surrounding conditions. He was essentially a weak man, and he was generally inclined to take the advice of the last person who strove to guide him on any particular subject. His vague ideas seldom crystalised into anything that could be called a clear opinion. That had been his trouble all through life, before he came to the throne and after. It must have been hard for those around him always to know what was the real King William beneath the Crown and within the State robes. He was often found ready to affirm, in tones of the deepest emotion, that nothing on earth should prevail on him to consent to some particular measure, and the very next day he yielded to the renewed pressure brought to bear on him by his Ministers, and he accepted the measure and put his royal signature to it. If he had had the obstinacy of George III. he would no doubt have done as much mischief in his time as George III. could do, and it was only his utter weakness which rendered his reign comparatively harmless to his people. He does not appear to have had any knowledge of public affairs which could have enabled him to distinguish for himself between a policy of reform and a policy of reaction, between measures which were constitutional and measures which were unconstitutional. No chapter of his life became him so well as that one chapter which ended in his death. There was something peculiarly pathetic about the consolation which he found to the last in a sincere faith in his

own integrity of purpose and his own desire to be a great and good sovereign. A great sovereign he certainly never could have been; nature had not given him any of the qualities which make great kings. He had not distinguished himself as a naval officer or a naval administrator; he had not, indeed, distinguished himself in any way. His youth and his manhood had been full of faults, and it was not until the responsibility of the Crown was imposed upon him that any real sense of public duty began to stir within his mind. We may, perhaps, say of him that he was a good King so far as his circumstances and his intellectual condition allowed him to be, and we may, at least, safely admit that he had not as King done one single act which his conscience had not at the particular moment declared to be good. His death is, in one sense, full of a deep historical interest. With him came to a close—and we may believe for ever—the long line of English sovereigns who clung to the faith that the business of a king is to govern according to his own goodwill and pleasure. William was, of course, talked again and again into governing as his Ministers would have him govern; but he always remained in the fond belief that he had done it all out of his own head and because he knew better than anybody else. He died on the morning of the 20th of May, 1837, and made way for the first really constitutional Sovereign of England.

III

QUEEN VICTORIA

WILLIAM IV. had only breathed his last word and given his last sigh when the messengers had started from Windsor to Kensington Palace to announce the event to his successor, and to summon a new Sovereign to the throne. William was the third son of George III., and had left no children to inherit the Crown. The next heir to the throne was the daughter of his brother, the Duke of Kent, who was George III.'s fourth son. This young Princess, Alexandrina Victoria, was born at Kensington Palace on the 24th of May, 1819, and was, therefore, little more than eighteen years of age. Her father died a very few months after her birth, and the young Princess was brought up under the care of her mother. That mother fulfilled her duty most faithfully to her child. The young Princess was not only well educated as far as mere teaching would go, but she was brought up to be courageous, self-reliant, prudent and economical. It had been well understood for a long time that she must, in the ordinary course of events, succeed to the throne, and every care was taken that her intellect



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and her heart should be fitted, so far as education could fit them, for the duties of the place to which she was to be called.

A very pretty description has been given by an eye-witness, Miss Wynn, of the manner in which the young Queen received the first news of her accession to the throne. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain had the official duty of making known to the Princess the fact that William IV. was dead and that Victoria reigned in his stead. They travelled from Windsor to Kensington Palace, which they reached about five o'clock in the morning. The Palace was in silence and darkness; the messengers had to ring and knock for some time before they could even arouse the porter at the gate. They demanded that the attendant of the Princess Victoria should be summoned and requested to inform her mistress that the King was dead, and that the young Queen was reigning. The attendant who was brought to speech with them said that the young Princess was asleep and must not be disturbed. The Archbishop and his colleague explained that they had come on business of State to the Queen, and that even her sleep must give way to that business. The story has been often told, but it will bear a brief telling again. When the Queen was roused and told of what had happened, she did not keep the messengers long waiting; in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white nightgown and shawl, her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes; but perfectly calm and dignified. The Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was sent for at once; and

a meeting of the Privy Council was summoned for eleven o'clock, when the Lord Chamberlain administered the usual oath to the Queen, and the new Sovereign received in return the oaths of allegiance of the Cabinet Ministers and of other Privy Councillors present.

Nothing could be more calm, composed, and dignified than the demeanour of the young Sovereign on whom such a weight of responsibility had been suddenly cast at so early an age; and she entered at once upon her State duties. One of the first among the Royal Dukes who took the oath of allegiance was the Duke of Cumberland, the man about whose darksome designs on the Crown of England so many alarming reports had spread through the country. There can be little doubt that there was some sort of an Orange plot which had for its object the setting aside of the Princess Victoria in favour of the Duke of Cumberland. Joseph Hume, the celebrated reformer, made the existence or supposed existence of such a plot a subject of debate in the House of Commons; and it is certain that the plot was believed in by a cool, hard-headed man like Joseph Hume himself, and by many other public men all over the country. A large number of persons persisted in the belief that the Duke of Cumberland was accessory to such a plot. It would be idle now to endeavour to ascertain whether the belief in the existence of such an Orange conspiracy had any actual foundation in fact, or whether, even if there were any such organisation, the Duke of Cumberland had anything to do with it. It is, however, a matter

of historical interest to know that a great number of people at the time believed not only in the plot, but in the Duke of Cumberland's association with it; while, on the other hand, several eminent public men among the Tories went about expressing their belief that if the Liberal Ministers were allowed to have their way the young Queen, little more than a child in years, would be made a mere instrument in the hands of the politicians whose chief object was to surrender the ancient constitution of the realm to the destroying and degrading powers of the Radicals and the Revolutionists. Turning back now to some of the speeches delivered at the time on both sides of the subject, one might almost fancy that England was going through just such another crisis as that which came about when Bolingbroke and Atterbury were planning the restoration of a Stuart sovereign. The time, however, had gone by for that sort of plotting and planning: no Stuart restoration was even talked of; and it may be taken as perfectly certain that even if the people of England did think of altering the succession they certainly would not have done so in favour of the Duke of Cumberland. Probably the whole story about the Duke of Cumberland only grew out of the common detestation in which his name was held by high and low in England. The death of William IV., in fact, brought about two auspicious events to all subjects of the British Crown: it brought the accession of Queen Victoria, and the withdrawal from England of the Duke of Cumberland. It has already been explained that the Crown of Hanover descends only through the male line, and

therefore, when William IV. ceased to be King of Hanover, he was succeeded in that kingdom by the Duke of Cumberland, who presently made himself as obnoxious to the people of Hanover as he had previously been to the people of Great Britain and Ireland. It was, in every sense, a good thing for the people of these countries to be cut off from all connection with the Kingdom of Hanover. What complications might not have been brought on England in later days if the King of England had still been King of Hanover it is not necessary now to consider. The Kingdom of Hanover has passed away, and the State is merged in the great Monarchy of Prussia. The Duke of Cumberland, as Sovereign of Hanover, did his best to destroy what remnant of liberty still remained in that State; and he had his day and his way; and has now well-nigh passed altogether out of history. It is a curious fact, well worthy of notice by the student of history, how wild was the alarm among the English Tories at the prospect of the new Sovereign committing herself to the hands of the levelling Whigs; and how firm was the belief in the breast of many a stout old Tory that this was exactly what was going to happen—that the headlong advocates of reform were to be allowed to level down as much as they pleased, and that the glory of the country was to be extinguished for ever. Such men talked as if Lord Melbourne, whom we now all regard as a well-meaning, lazy, and timid old gentleman, were a radical reformer after the fashion of Orator Hunt or Feargus O'Connor.

When Queen Victoria came to the throne there

were many men of the highest order of ability in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Brougham was, perhaps, the strongest man in the House of Lords, so far as eloquence and energy and passion can constitute strength. But he was a man of fitful temperament, and just now he was very much out of temper with the Whig party and therefore with Lord Melbourne. In 1830, as we have seen, he was made Lord Chancellor ; and when the Whig Ministry was reconstructed in 1835 his name was passed over and he was left out of office. From that time Lord Brougham passed into what might be called independent opposition. He was inclined to oppose anybody and everybody ; perhaps his genius and his temper fitted him better for opposition than for any other part. There was for a long time much conjecture as to the reasons which inspired the Whig statesmen when they deliberately passed over Lord Brougham's name in the re-composition of their Ministry. One surmise has always been that Lord Brougham's wild eccentricities and unbearable temper made him unsuitable for any Cabinet office. Indeed, it was believed by many that his intellect was liable to be suddenly clouded over by fits and starts, as the intellect of the great Lord Chatham was said to have been at more than one epoch of his life.

Brougham's great rival in the House of Lords was John Singleton Copley, Lord Lyndhurst, whom we have met before in the course of this narrative. Lyndhurst was the son of a celebrated painter who lived in Boston in America, where young Copley was born a year before the time when the tea ships were

boarded in Boston Harbour and their contents spilt into the water. The family came over to England, and young Copley applied himself to the study of law, and rose in his profession until he had taken its highest honours, and he became Lord Chancellor. He was the only man in the House of Lords at the time of Queen Victoria's accession who could fairly have stood up and contended against Brougham. He was, unquestionably, one of the most effective debaters of the age, which included the best of Robert Peel's career, the great successes of Lord Palmerston, the eloquence of such men as Gladstone and Disraeli, Cobden and Bright. He was not merely the rival, but often the contrast to Brougham; for while he had all Brougham's passion for work, and no amount of toil at the Bar, on the Bench, or in Parliament ever seemed to weary him, his style was singularly unlike that of Brougham. Lyndhurst had a clear, melodious, and penetrating voice, a style singularly direct and effective, without superfluity of words or exuberance of gesture. He was absolutely free from any of Brougham's extravagance of rhetoric; he was as smooth and graceful as Brougham was rough and ungainly; he had none of Brougham's passion, but he had none of Brougham's strength of conviction. He had now settled down to be a regular Tory, one of the successful order who always expect office when their party is in power, and are always expected to take a leading share in opposition when their party is out of power. It might have puzzled the keenest observer to say why Lyndhurst was a Tory rather than a Whig; and if events had put it the other way,

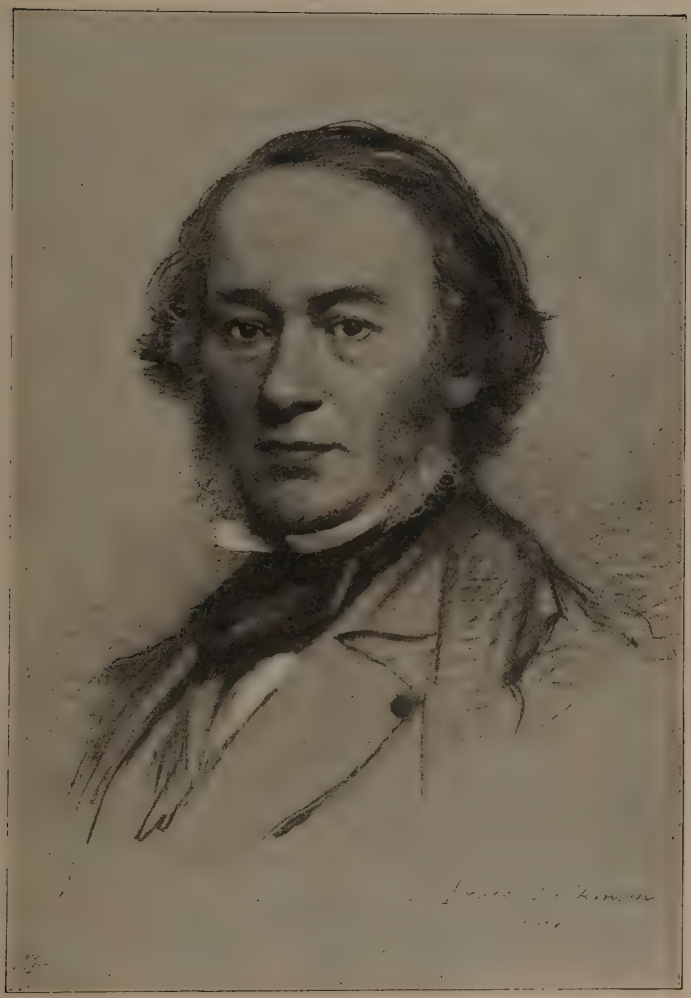
it would be just as puzzling to say why he should be a Whig rather than a Tory. He did not seem to have any strong convictions except such as were forced upon him by the necessity of taking a leading part in debate on the Tory side. The beauty, purity, and keenness of his style made the listener sometimes think of a sparkling, swift-running stream. Some of his admirers had gone so far as to rank him with the highest parliamentary orators known to English history. The lurking doubt in the minds of others, who were also his warm admirers, was whether he could be described as, in the highest sense, an orator at all. The criticism of a man who was undoubtedly a great parliamentary orator, was that Lyndhurst maintained too constantly the same high level of excellence in his speeches to have those highest qualities of eloquence which come like the poet's sudden flash of inspiration, and are not always to be summoned and set in array at the speaker's will. Lyndhurst lived to a great old age and kept up his faculties to the very last. The writer of this volume can never forget the last speech he heard Lyndhurst make. It was delivered in the House of Lords during the session of 1860. It was a masterly display of argument and of eloquence, delivered in a voice which made itself easily heard by the remotest listener in the galleries of a Chamber which was not then, as it is not now, thought highly of for its quality in the conveyance of sound. It would have been a powerful and brilliant speech for a man of forty; and it was spoken on the eve of Lord Lyndhurst's eighty-ninth birthday.

These were the two great debaters in the House of Lords when Queen Victoria came to the throne. Lord Stanley was still in the House of Commons; had he been then in the House of Lords three men and not two would have contested for the palm in eloquence. The House of Lords, of course, remained the same as it had been during the reign of William IV. The House of Commons was a new assembly. According to the rule which prevailed at the time, and which was not altered until many years later, a dissolution of Parliament had to take place at the opening of every reign; and a new House of Commons had to be elected. In this new House of Commons the Tories made a slight improvement on their position. There was an uncertainty in the public mind which the demeanour and the ways of Lord Melbourne only tended to increase, as to the relative merits of the Whigs and Tories, as to the real difference, in fact, between a Tory and a Whig. This condition of things naturally gave an advantage to the Tories. Reformers can hardly be enthusiastic unless when they are quite certain that their leaders are full of reforming energy; and there was only one Liberal leader, Lord John Russell, in whom the outer public felt any confidence of this kind, and Lord John Russell's manners were somewhat cold and distant, and were not calculated to make any direct appeal to popular enthusiasm. At this time Lord John Russell was leader of the Ministerial party in the House of Commons; and Sir Robert Peel was leader of the Opposition. Peel had not then come near to the zenith of his fame; he proved himself afterwards to

be one of the greatest parliamentary orators and one of the greatest statesmen of his time; but at the opening of the Queen's reign he was only at the opening of his real career. Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel were destined to be opposing leaders in the House of Commons almost down to Peel's death. If Peel became Prime Minister, Russell became leader of the Opposition in the Commons. When Russell became Prime Minister, Peel fell back into the place of leader of the Opposition. Their political lives for many years formed a great parliamentary duel, like that between the younger Fox and the younger Pitt, like that between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli at a later day. The most remarkable figure in the House of Commons, if we leave out the leaders on both sides, was that of O'Connell, the great Irish tribune, whose colossal form was sure to attract in a moment the attention of all strangers in the galleries of the House. His leading colleague in Irish politics was Richard Lalor Sheil, a man to whom both Gladstone and Disraeli at different times ascribed the palm of highest eloquence, but who only left behind him a memory which is curiously fading out in our days. There were many men of high literary position in the new House of Commons, and some who were destined to win a literary repute before long.

George Grote, the celebrated historian of Greece, was one of the Members for the City of London, and was one of the earliest and most thorough advocates of the ballot system in parliamentary election. Edward Lytton Bulwer, afterwards Lord Lytton, famous as a popular novelist, sat as an advanced

Radical, a position he gradually relinquished in the course of years for a sort of picturesque Conservatism, which might have suited his own hero Ernest Maltravers. Mr. Disraeli had entered Parliament for the first time, after more than one unsuccessful venture. He had not come in as a Tory, but as a man with a political creed all of his own making ; he had accepted the support of O'Connell, and had described himself in a letter to a distinguished Radical leader as one whose strong point was sedition. Mr. Disraeli, it need hardly be said, soon dropped sedition and Radicalism, and became even a more picturesque Tory than Ernest Maltravers ever could have been. Mr. Gladstone had been five years in Parliament when he was again elected to the House of Commons at the opening of the reign. He had not, as yet, made any real mark in the House ; and Disraeli had not as yet delivered his first speech there. Lord Palmerston was Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and sat, of course, in the House of Commons, being only an Irish Peer. No one then suspected Palmerston of anything like the capacity for the work of the Foreign Office, and for parliamentary debate, which he afterwards proved himself to possess. Charles Buller, a man of great ability, with a knowledge of the principles of political economy very rare in those days, was looked upon as one of the great rising lights of Parliament, until a premature death suddenly blew out the light. Mr. Cobden had been a candidate for the Borough of Stockport, but was defeated at the polling and did not enter the House until some years later. Bright had not at that time come forward as a



RICHARD COBDEN.
1804–1865.

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candidate. Macaulay and Roebuck happened, by what might almost be called an accident, to fail in obtaining seats at the General Election. Joseph Hume, the great advocate of economy and of all economic reforms, was in the House, a man of genuine ability and absolute integrity of purpose, but a heavy and confused speaker, of whom O'Connell humorously observed that Hume might make a good speech if only he would endeavour to finish one sentence before beginning the next but one after.

Mr. Charles Villiers was a member of that Parliament—Charles Villiers who only died lately, just after the celebration of his ninty-sixth birthday. Sir Francis Burdett was a member, and so, too, was William Smith O'Brien, then only known as a Tory landlord of the highest class, whose political career closed after the ill-fated Irish insurrection of 1848—a man of honour, a thorough gentleman, and a true patriot, although not gifted with the genius of leadership or even with the practical common sense which must go in any path of politics to make a successful leader. That was in every way a remarkable House of Commons which was summoned together on the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne. Lord Melbourne in the one House and Lord John Russell in the other had a difficult task to carry on the work of Government in the face of an Opposition so strong in leadership, in capacity, and even in numbers. Lord Melbourne and his Government were placed between two fires, between the Tories, who were opposed to all reform, and a number of the more advanced Radicals, who wanted more

reform than the Ministry was able to give, and who wanted reform to move on at a rapid pace. The country in general was crying out for more reform and more; and Lord Melbourne had not the energy or the genius to promote the measures of change which were everywhere demanded by the Liberal party out of doors. Lord Melbourne's Government tried several measures of improvement in various directions, political and social; and now that we can look back upon what they did accomplish we can see that some of the measures they introduced belong strictly to the great reforming movement, and must always have a place in history. Some of these reforms have already been described by anticipation when they were simply further developments of the good work done by former Liberal Administrations. But, on the other hand, there was undoubtedly a wave of reaction coming up. This is a phenomenon which is always to be seen by any one who follows closely the course of modern English history. This principle of action followed by reaction, is as inevitable as the ebb of a tide following its flow. The unconcerned outer public have a way of soon becoming tired of reforms moving on at a rapid pace; and there is a tendency in all men who are not the active followers of a great principle or a great cause, to think that enough has been done for a time, and to fall into the mood of the lotus eaters described in Tennyson's poem, who asked for nothing but to be let alone. Lord Melbourne had to contend against this temper, into which so many of the public, and nearly all of what is called society, had begun to

settle down. He had to contend also against the dissatisfaction of some of the leading men who were still nominally counted as among his followers, and he had to deal with an Opposition reinforced by the recent elections, and led by so consummate a statesman and parliamentary debater as Sir Robert Peel.

The Ministry began to sink lower and lower in public estimation, and everybody knew that their sand was fast running out. To add to Lord Melbourne's troubles, he had to deal with a crisis in Jamaica, which required, above all things, promptness and energy. This difficulty arose out of the wise and just and philanthropic measures which had been taken to put an end to the system of slavery in the West Indian islands. After the abolition of slavery the planters of Jamaica were unwilling and unable to reconcile themselves to the new condition of things. They could not understand that they were henceforth to regard their former slaves as now their equals before the law. The social condition was very like that which prevailed in the Southern States of America after the emancipation of the negroes had been proclaimed, and when the great Civil War had come to an end. The Jamaica planters, like the planters in Virginia, made pertinacious efforts to retain, in fact, the mastery which had been abolished by law, and on many of the plantations the system of slavery was maintained in reality in one way or another, although the law and the progress of civilisation and the courses of the stars were against them. This led to a continual intervention by the Colonial Office at home and a constant quarrel

between the Jamaica House of Assembly and the authorities at Westminster. In April, 1839, Lord Melbourne and his colleagues made an attempt to deal with the subject, and they brought in a Bill to make temporary provision for the better government of the island by setting aside for five years the House of Assembly, and ruling Jamaica during that interval by means of the Governor and his Council, with the assistance of three Commissioners appointed by the home authorities for that special purpose. In other words, the Government proposed to deal with Jamaica during five years as if it were a Crown Colony. Now, under all the circumstances, such a measure was not only justifiable, but may be almost called inevitable if the policy proclaimed by Great Britain was to be really carried out. The House of Assembly in Jamaica had set itself directly against such a policy, and either the whole scheme of emancipation must be abandoned so far as that Colony was concerned, or the House of Assembly must be compelled to accept the principle which the Parliament of Great Britain had solemnly determined to enforce. All this is true, and it would be hardly possible for any cool observer now to say that Lord Melbourne and his colleagues could have acted otherwise than as they did. All the same, nothing can be more difficult for a Liberal Ministry than to enter upon any course which seems to resemble that of despotic action. In all modern times this has been found an especial difficulty. Those who had opposed the abolition of slavery in our Colonies when the measure was first brought forward were now only too delighted by the

chance which it put in their way of endeavouring to turn the very friends of the Ministry against them. With what face, it was indignantly asked, can a Ministry, formed especially to carry on constitutional and Liberal reform, set about to override the representative principle even in such a place as the Island of Jamaica? That might be all very well for the Tory party, it was said, for the Tory party, who had never professed any new-fangled devotion to what were called the principles of representative government. But you, you, the Liberals, who only the other day upset the whole of the system of government prescribed for this country by the wisdom of our ancestors; you, who in order to create a popular House of Commons, thought it nothing to deprive the landlord of his right to have his property represented as he saw fit, and even to deprive the Sovereign of his time-honoured right to send such members into Parliament as he found best fitted to represent him; how comes it that you are already willing to introduce a Bill which quietly disestablishes for a definite period of five years, and for no one knows how long afterwards, the Constitutional Assembly of Jamaica, and to govern the island after what fashion you please?

The friends of abolition stood by the Ministry gallantly, although many of them had lost faith in the energy, and some had lost faith even in the sincerity, of the Melbourne Administration. But when the critical time came the Ministry only carried their measure by a majority of five in the House of Commons. A majority so small as that is always

reckoned in modern days equivalent to the defeat of a Government. The time had quite gone by when the Sovereign could of his own will maintain his Ministers, not only without a majority of the House of Commons, but even in the face of an adverse majority. There was now, for the first time, a thoroughly constitutional Sovereign on the throne of these countries; and it was quite certain that, even if Lord Melbourne were wild enough to ask for a Royal support which would have sufficed in the days of William Pitt, the new Queen would have nothing to do with such a transaction. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had no course open to them but to resign office; and the Queen had no course open to her but to accept their resignation. Probably Lord Melbourne himself was very glad to get the chance of escaping from an irksome position, which was ill-suited to a man so fond of ease, and who had so little sense of the enjoyment of the strife. So what every one had anticipated was now coming to pass; and Lord Melbourne and his colleagues were out of office. But then, what nobody anticipated was just what did come to pass, and Lord Melbourne and his colleagues were no sooner out of office than they were in office again. The story is worth telling, although it has no historical importance now; it is worth telling if only for the mere curiosity of the whole adventure. The Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, and the Duke recommended her to send at once for Sir Robert Peel on the ground that the chief difficulties of a Conservative Government would be found in the House of Com-

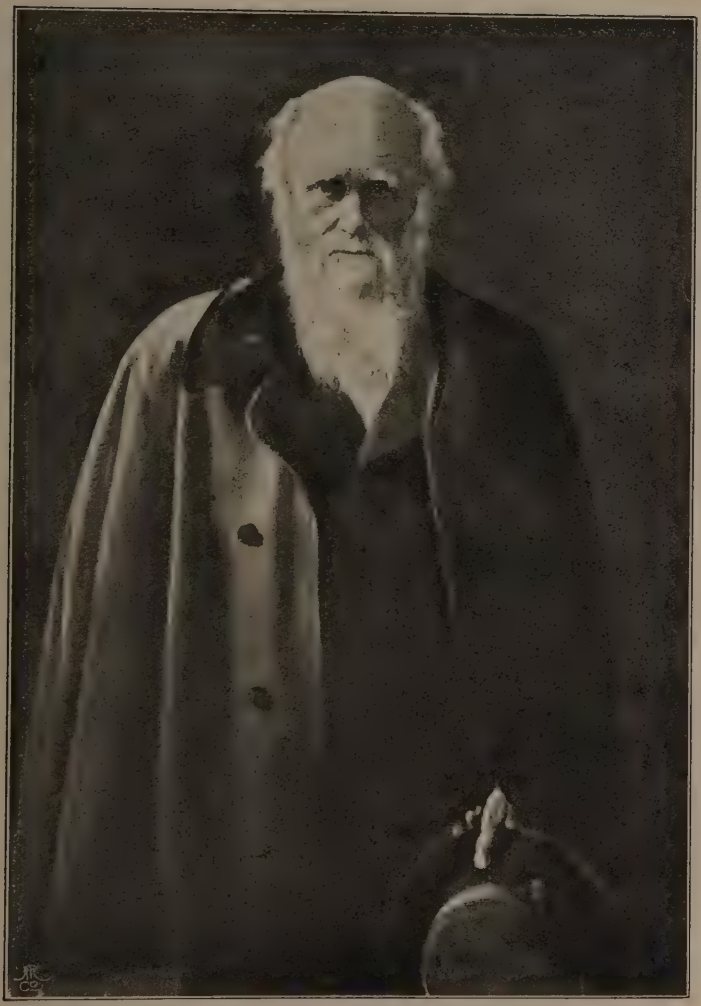
mons—there was no difficulty about the House of Lords, where the Conservative majority was then as certain as it would be to-day—and Sir Robert Peel was, therefore, obviously the man to form and lead the new administration. The Queen sent for Peel accordingly, and when he came to see her she told him with a girlish frankness, which became her and which touched the statesman, that she had parted very reluctantly from Lord Melbourne and the other Ministers, of whose conduct she had entirely approved, but she felt bound to defer to constitutional usage and to accept the resignation of Ministers who could not secure a real working majority of the House of Commons. Peel with all his experiences of sovereigns must have found this a new experience, and must in his heart have welcomed the evidence of a new era in English political life. He undertook to form a Ministry; and then came the famous dispute known at the time and destined to be remembered in English history as the Bedchamber Question. Everything was going on smoothly between the Sovereign and Peel. The Queen accepted every name which Peel proposed to her in the list of the new Ministry; but Peel suddenly came to observe the composition of the Royal household and the names of the ladies of the Bedchamber, as the official phrase goes, who were to be in the closest attendance on the Queen. Among these he noticed the names of the wife of a late Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under the Whig Party, and the sister of Lord Morpeth, who was Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant in the same Administration. It occurred very naturally to

Peel's mind that the chief difficulty of the new Conservative Government would, as a matter of necessity, be in Ireland where the Whigs had long been holding out hopes to O'Connell and his followers—hopes which the very business of a Tory Administration would make it impossible to encourage. Peel, therefore, felt that it would not be possible for him to carry out with facility the policy which he intended to administer in Ireland if the wife and the sister of two Liberal statesmen, now turned out of office, were to be the closest companions of the Sovereign. All this seems very absurd now, and we can hardly wonder if foreign States found it extremely ridiculous that Peel should insist on dictating to the young Sovereign who were to be and who were not to be her closest companions among the ladies of her Court. Peel, however, held fast to his purpose, and declined to form an administration unless the two ladies in question were withdrawn from the Royal household. To make matters worse Peel, under these difficult and embarrassing conditions, seems to have introduced new difficulties and new embarrassments by failing to convey to the young Sovereign a correct idea of his meaning. The Queen was left under the impression that Peel intended to claim for a new administration the right of dictating the composition of the Royal household. As the story first became known to the public, it went about that Peel had actually asserted the right of a new Prime Minister to clear out the whole staff of the Queen's attendant women, including, no doubt, the laundry women and the kitchenmaids. All Peel wanted to do was to

prevail upon her Majesty to make some arrangement by which the wife and sister of two displaced Liberal statesmen should not remain in the closest official companionship with the Queen, on whose young mind Peel fancied that these ladies would work in a manner unfavourable to the policy of the new Conservative Administration. Peel did not then know the Queen; he knew nothing of the respect for the constitution which then and afterwards governed all her public conduct. On the other hand, the Queen was left under the impression that Peel was setting up a new, a preposterous, and a positively offensive claim, which she could not with dignity accept. Had she understood, had Peel made it clear, that his only object was to point out to her that the close companionship of these two ladies might create an unsatisfactory impression on the public mind, and might lead to some idea among the Conservatives that the policy of their leaders was likely to be countermined by petticoat influence, it may be taken for granted that the Queen would have made some satisfactory arrangement.

As it was the whole question became a muddle, and the news of the controversy was received at first with a general burst of laughter, and then with an outbreak of almost extravagant anger against Peel on the part of the whole body of reformers in Great Britain and Ireland. The Queen consulted Lord John Russell on the subject, and Russell advised her very properly and justly on what he understood to be the real state of the facts. The Queen acted on his advice, and made it known that she could not

consent to the course which she conceived to be contrary to usage, and which was repugnant to her own feelings. Outside the ranks of the most inveterate Conservatives there was only the one feeling, that the Queen had behaved with propriety, dignity, and with true womanly courage. Peel became intensely unpopular in London and in nearly all parts of the country. One of the amusing stories told at the time is about the reception given by a popular audience to a very innocent line in a play at one of the London theatres. One scene discovered a captive princess in a prison tower, who hears the notes of a dismal bell. She says, according to her text, "I hate that peal, the solemn swell"; and she was going to say more when she was interrupted by a burst of vociferous cheering from boxes, pit, and galleries which stopped the performance for a time. The audience had given a personal meaning to the line by cheering and by uproarious laughter. In the meanwhile Peel was out of office just as he was about to enter it, and Lord Melbourne and his colleagues were invited to return, just after they had made what seemed to be their parting bow. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had to resume their places; and at the first meeting of the Cabinet they adopted a minute which of itself shows that for some reason or other Sir Robert Peel's real meaning had been misunderstood. The minute which they adopted declared it reasonable that the great offices of the Court and situations in the Household held by Members of Parliament should be included in the political arrangements made in the change of an administra-

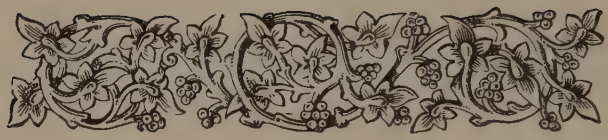


CHARLES DARWIN.
1809–1882.

tion ; " but they are not of opinion that a similar principle should be applied or extended to the offices held by ladies of Her Majesty's Household." Of course the whole dispute became a subject of question and reply, explanation and discussion, in both Houses of Parliament. Peel certainly did not better his position by the rhetorical extravagance of the language in which he defended his course of action. Like many a man habitually reserved and cautious of speech, Peel could, under certain temptations, break into hyperbolical eloquence which might have come with some effect from the mouth of Lord Brougham or Lord Durham, but which seemed absolutely ridiculous when it issued from the lips of a statesman habitually careful in the use of his words and rarely given to three-piled hyperbole. Lord Melbourne for once grew impassioned on the other side, and the whole dispute could hardly have impressed foreign nations with a very profound sense of the dignity of Constitutional Government. The question was finally settled after the Queen's marriage by an amicable and sensible arrangement suggested by the Prince Consort. At the time of the dispute itself the Queen was still unmarried. It was agreed upon that on a change of Ministry the Queen would listen to any representation from the new Prime Minister as to the composition of her Household, and would arrange for the retirement, of their own accord, of any ladies who were so closely related to the leaders of Opposition as to render their presence inconvenient. The whole teapot tempest soon blew over : but Lord Melbourne and his colleagues found them-

selves sadly discredited when they came back into office. The ridiculous nature of the controversy threw for the time a distorting light on all they did or attempted to do. Lord Brougham found it a happy chance for attacking Lord Melbourne, whom he detested and despised, and against whom, as we have seen, he had a bitter grudge. He positively charged Lord Melbourne with having sacrificed the Liberal cause and the best interests of the country to the personal feelings of the Sovereign. This was, of course, extravagant ; but it was not more extravagant than most of the talk which went on for a time on both sides of the controversy. Lord Melbourne came back to office—there was no other course for him to take. He could not refuse to form a Ministry when his great opponent Peel found himself unable to construct one, or at least to accept the conditions under which alone he could have made himself welcome to the Sovereign. The remainder of Lord Melbourne's tenure of office was, however, only a gradual descent, and the inevitable end could not be long postponed. He was greatly attached to the Sovereign ; and his kindly, fatherly ways had made him welcome to the young Queen when the duties of her high position first came upon her. But the remainder of his political career is of little account in history, except in so far as it helped to develop still further some of the Reform movements which had been set going by men of more statesmanlike intellect and energy. We may take our farewell of him here ; a generous, kindly, indolent, well-meaning old man. When he died in retirement in 1848 his

death brought to the notice of many the fact that he had once lived, had been a Prime Minister, and had been an almost passive associate in the great work of Reform.



IV

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CANADIAN DOMINION

In the first year of the young Queen's reign serious disturbances, which soon grew into actual rebellion, broke out in Canada. This colony had been the possession of the British Crown since the days of the victories of General Wolfe. The vast colony of Canada was then divided into two provinces, known as Upper and Lower Canada. Lower Canada was inhabited almost altogether by men of French descent who still kept up the ways and the usages of provincial France before the Revolution. Even in the two great cities of Montreal and Quebec, although each had a considerable sprinkling of Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Americans, the character and tone were distinctly those of an almost medieval French society. Upper Canada, on the other hand, was peopled almost entirely by settlers from England and from Scotland, and from the Northern Province of Ireland, who were in origin, in ways, and in accent almost altogether Scotch. At that time the wave of emigration from the other provinces of Ireland had not much affected either of the Canadian

divisions. The inhabitants of Upper Canada were a go-ahead population, full of energy and activity, eager to set trade and commerce moving, ambitious of a rivalry with the populations of the great American Republic, and devoted to the English connection and the English flag. Lower Canada only asked to be let alone, and to be happy in its picturesque, old-fashioned way. Upper Canada was, roughly speaking, almost altogether Protestant; Lower Canada almost altogether Catholic. It would have been difficult enough, even for the wisest system of government from Westminster, to deal satisfactorily with two provinces thus different in traditions, in habits, and in feelings. But it must be owned that the system of government which was worked out rom Westminster was calculated to increase rather than diminish the difficulties. The population of Lower Canada regarded with constant alarm and jealousy any measure of legislation which seemed likely to overbear their French traditions, and to hamper their religious freedom, or to give any undue advantage to what we may call the Protestant province. The inhabitants of Upper Canada, on the other hand, were impatient of any policy which seemed to discourage their efforts, and to show too much indulgence to the antiquated ways of the other province. At the time when the colony was divided into these two provinces, the Upper and the Lower, by an Act called the Constitution of 1791, the intention of the Home Government doubtless was that the two colonies should remain absolutely distinct in arrangements as well as in name. The idea was

that Lower Canada should continue to be French and that Upper Canada should continue to be English. Then, of course, there would have been no more difficulty in dealing with either province than there is in dealing with any two far-divided colonies, the populations of which are different from each other in traditions, usages, and language. But the trouble was that the Canadian provinces were not far apart from each other; and could not be kept absolutely separate. Upper Canada had no means of regular communication with Europe and the outer world in general, except through Lower Canada or through the American Republic. Each of the two provinces had a separate system of government; each had a Governor and Executive Council appointed by the Crown; each had a Legislative Council, or Upper Chamber, the members of which were appointed by the Crown and appointed for life; and each had a Representative Assembly, the members of which were elected for four years. One-seventh of the waste lands of each colony was set aside for the maintenance of the Protestant clergy; and while we have already said that the population of Lower Canada were almost exclusively Catholic, it may be added that a good many of the Scotch Dissenters in Upper Canada were even already beginning to grumble at the idea of having to support a State Church out of public revenues. The Legislative Council of each province was, of course, absolutely obedient to every direction sent out from the Government at Westminster. The Legislative Council, over and over again, thwarted

in Lower Canada the decisions of the Representative Chamber. The Representative Chamber had again and again passed votes of censure on some of the officials, and the Government, nevertheless, retained those officials in their service, and enforced the right of the Crown to have them paid out of the public funds of the province.

Lower Canada again and again demanded that the Legislative Council should be made representative, and not nominee; and that the Government at home should not be allowed to dispose of the Provinces' public funds according to the good-will and pleasure of the statesmen at Westminster. The Government at home, and not only the Government, but the House of Commons as well, refused to listen to any such demands, or any such complaints; and made it clear to the Lower Canadians that they were to be ruled absolutely by the decrees of the Crown officials at home. When the Representative Assembly in Lower Canada carried their opposition too far, the Governor of the province, acting, of course, upon instructions from home, simply dissolved the provincial Parliament and called for a new General Election. The result of all this was just what might be expected; great popular meetings were held all over the province, and the conduct of the Home Government was undoubtedly denounced in very strong language which, according to the fashion of the time, was met by the Crown authorities with arrests and prosecutions. Resistance to some of these arrests developed at last into open rebellion. Upper Canada, meanwhile, loyal and devoted though

it was to the British Crown, had its own complaints, and its own protests. One of the many complaints was, that the offices all through the province were filled up in accordance with a sort of family compact which left no chance to the inhabitants at large. The rebellion in Lower Canada could, no doubt, have been easily suppressed, although in the first instance the military authorities were taken by surprise, and the rebels obtained some slight advantages. But it was impossible to conceal the fact that while as yet there was no actual rebellion in Upper Canada, there was discontent enough to make it rather unwise for the Home Government to push matters too far. There was, in fact, a growing impatience among the sturdy settlers in Upper Canada, of the system which made them the mere serfs of the Imperial Government and the Imperial Parliament. The Canadians of the Upper Province had near at hand the example of the American Republic, where every State could elect its own officers, as well as its own legislative chambers; and could make what laws it thought fit, so far as merely local affairs were concerned. In plain fact, the population of Upper Canada had outgrown the system of rule which was absurdly imposed upon them. They were too strong, too active, too intelligent, and too far removed from England, to submit to the dictation of a little knot of officials in a room at Westminster. It might have been comparatively easy to keep the people of Lower Canada quiet, if only some little consideration had been shown for their traditions and for their feelings. They might

have been content to go on quietly for long enough, if only they were left in peace to pursue their ancient ways. But it is quite certain that every succeeding year would have made the English and Scotch inhabitants of Upper Canada more and more impatient of the system of grotesquely paternal rule, which was insisted upon by the Crown officials at home.

The news of the outbreak of rebellion in Lower Canada created naturally a great sensation in England. Many men of mark and of great popular influence found themselves so far in sympathy with the rebels, that at least they regarded the rebellion as the inevitable result of an indefensible system. The Government had to do something, and fortunately the direction of their policy was in the hands of a real statesman. Lord John Russell introduced on behalf of the Government a Bill which proposed to suspend for a time the Constitution of Lower Canada, pending a full inquiry into the whole circumstances of the crisis, the inquiry to be conducted by a Governor-General and Lord High Commissioner, to be sent out from England armed with full powers to deal with the rebellion; but also armed—and here came in the real point of the measure—with full powers to remodel the Constitution both of Lower and of Upper Canada. There was really nothing better to be done; and though the Government scheme met with opposition of various kinds, yet it was agreed to in the end; the general conviction being, that the whole trouble was too deeply rooted and had spread too far to be dealt with by any

recommendation which the ingenuity of the Westminster officials, or even the House of Commons, could devise on the spur of the moment. Everything, it was naturally thought, must depend on the man who was sent out to Canada with the mission of reconstruction. There was a general feeling of relief and satisfaction when Lord John Russell told the House of Commons who the man was to be; he was John George Lambton, Earl of Durham. Lord Durham has been already mentioned in this history more than once. He was a man of great ability and extraordinary energy; he belonged to one of the oldest families in England, for the Lambtons had lived on their estate in the North in unbroken descent since the days of William the Conqueror. The great wealth of the family was derived chiefly from coal mines which had been growing and growing in importance, and in what a mine-owner would call output, during generations; for the original value of the landed property was, for a long time, not great. John George Lambton, the Lord Durham with whom we are at present dealing, had had a somewhat romantic career. Before he was twenty years of age he had made a runaway marriage at Gretna Green, with a young lady who died three years later; and about a year after her death, he married the eldest daughter of Lord Grey. He had served for a short time in a Hussar regiment; and had been elected to the House of Commons when still very young. He soon made a name for himself, as one of the most advanced and energetic of reformers. He brought out a scheme of reform of his own construction,

as early as 1821, a scheme of a thoroughly democratic nature in principle, anticipating many of the changes which the great Reform Bill, passed some ten years later, failed to introduce. He was, undoubtedly, a man of great ability; but of an impulsive temperament, an impatient, passionate nature. We have already mentioned the part he took with Lord Grey and Lord John Russell in preparing the Great Reform Bill; and we know that if he had had his way in that measure, the principle of vote by ballot would have been adopted. He was a difficult man to get on with in office; his colleagues complained of his overbearing manner; and even the stately Lord Grey, unbending to most others, had sometimes to give way to him. He went through the country on more than one occasion, addressing public meetings, just as O'Connell might have done, or John Bright at a later day; and he cared nothing for the notions of society, according to which a man of rank ought to keep his eloquence for Parliament only. Lord Durham was not a man to care much about the conventionalities of social etiquette; and if he wanted to accomplish a purpose, he sought the most ready and direct way of attaining it. He believed that the people were becoming a power with which Parliament would have, henceforth, to reckon; and he gave his faculties of persuasion rather to the people than to the Parliament. He was a man of original character in every sense; and he soon began to be looked up to as the rising hope of the country by the more advanced and especially by the extreme Liberals; and to be dreaded and

denounced by slow-going, indolent Liberals, as well as by reactionary Tories.

All those who were really concerned in the welfare of Canada, and knew anything about the subject, were gratified when it became known that the mission of pacification had been entrusted to Durham. If he had not the ability and the courage to evolve order out of that chaos, the impression among such men was that nobody else could be found equal to the task. Lord Durham went out to Canada taking with him as his special advisers, two men well qualified for such work—Mr. Charles Buller and Mr. Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Lord Durham took it for granted, as the Canadian colonists themselves did, that he was sent out to Canada in the character of a Dictator, and as a Dictator he acted accordingly. He amazed the slow-going politicians at Westminster by the audacity of his actions. He issued a series of decrees intended to put a stop to the rebellion; and in which, no doubt, he went far outside the limits of constitutional law; but he acted on a principle clearly defined in his own mind. It was plain to him that there was no use in talking of constitutional law in a colony, the constitution of which had already been completely suspended by the authorities at home. Some of his decrees amounted, in substance, to a sentence of perpetual banishment against the leaders of the rebellion who had already escaped from Canada; but as regarded what we may call the rank and file of the rebels, he decreed a very liberal amnesty. He shaped a plan for the future government of the country, in which he was greatly

assisted by the intellect and the pre-vision of the gifted and accomplished men, Charles Buller and Edward Wakefield, whom he had brought with him to be his special advisers. That scheme became the foundation, not only of the future government of Canada, but of the system that now prevails in all our Colonies. Lord Durham proposed to set up in Canada a thorough system of municipal institutions; to secure the independence of the judges; to make all provincial officers, except alone the Governor and his Secretary, responsible to the Colonial Legislature; and he proposed to establish that legislature on a thoroughly representative foundation. In the first instance, he arranged that the two provinces, Upper and Lower Canada, should be re-united, politically; and should become one legislative system, containing the representatives of both races and of all districts. Lord Durham's Report also recommended, and this is a most important fact to which attention cannot be too closely directed, that provision should be made by which all, or any, of the other American Colonies might be allowed, on the application of their Legislatures, and with the consent of Canada itself, to be admitted into the Canadian system. Thus, it will be seen, he proposed to make the Canadians self-governing as regards their purely local affairs; and he laid the foundations of that federal system for the Colonies which British North America was so soon to develop.

In the meantime Lord Durham's enemies were raging at home. They fixed their eyes, and endeavoured to fix the eyes of others, on the mere fact

that in his decrees intended for the immediate suppression of the rebellion, he had outstepped the limits of constitutional law. It was not pretended, even by the worst of his enemies, that he had done this from any desire for a vindictive punishment of the Canadian rebels. In fact, the more his decrees were studied and their meaning thoroughly understood, the more it became apparent that Lord Durham's great object was to restore peace with the least possible effusion of blood. But, undoubtedly, he had decreed things which, under ordinary circumstances, a Lord High Commissioner would have had no power to decree. If, for example, Lord Durham had been sent as Government Commissioner to deal with some disturbances caused, let us say, by a strike in one of the mining counties of England, it is quite clear that he would have had no power whatever to issue any decrees which put aside the existing laws. But then Lord Durham had been sent out to deal with a colony, the whole constitution of which was already superseded by the authorities of the Mother Country. He had been sent out to a colony where the Government officials controlled the judges and packed the juries, and rendered a fair trial impossible for any one who was in opposition to any of the local controlling influences. The business of the Lord High Commissioner, as it seemed to Lord Durham, and as it seems to every one now, was simply to clear the field of all the old obstructions, and make an open space on which a new constitutional scheme might be erected. But his enemies at home were too strong for him ; and the Government, on the whole,

were weak. A dispatch was issued annulling Lord Durham's Ordinances, and Durham was not exactly the kind of man to submit quietly to the overruling of his authority. He returned to England a man who, in the official meaning of the words, might be considered disgraced and ruined. But there was still public spirit enough among the Liberals of England, to ensure him when he landed at Plymouth the popular welcome which he deserved. The Government had ordered that no official honours should be paid to him; but the population turned out and welcomed him as a public benefactor and a hero. He had on his side one man whose authority will now be accepted by the world in general as outweighing that of any number of Government officials, the authority of Mr. John Stuart Mill. Mill, in his Autobiography, tells us that Lord Durham was bitterly attacked from all sides, inveighed against by enemies, given up by timid friends; while those who would willingly have defended him, did not know what to say. He appeared to be returning a defeated and discredited man. "I had followed the Canadian events from the beginning; I had been one of the prompters of his prompters; his policy was almost exactly what mine would have been; and I was in a position to defend it: I wrote and published a manifesto in the *Westminster Review*, in which I took the highest ground in his behalf, claiming for him not mere acquittal, but fame and honour. Instantly a number of other writers took up the tone." Further, Mr. Mill says, "Lord Durham's report written by Charles Buller, partly under the

inspiration of Wakefield, began a new era. Its recommendations, extending to complete internal self-government, were in full operation in Canada within two or three years; and have been since extended to nearly all the other colonies of European race which have any claim to the character of important communities." Lord John Russell shortly after brought in with right good will, a Bill described by him as intended to lay the foundation of a permanent settlement for the colony of Canada. Lord John Russell was then Secretary for the Colonies; and had always taken a deep interest in Colonial affairs. In 1840 the Bill was passed which reunited Upper and Lower Canada on the lines laid down by Lord Durham. Lord Durham did not live to see the growth of the scheme. He had gone to the Isle of Wight for rest and in the hope that the soft air might restore his shaken health. It was too late, however, and in a few days after the passing of the Act he died His later years were but another illustration of Dryden's immortal lines, which tell how the

> "Fiery soul that, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed its tenement of clay."

He wanted the patience which would have enabled another man to bear the struggles and the humiliations that had lately come upon him. But if his political career, regarded from the point of view of personal ambition, was a failure, his scheme for the reorganisation of Canada proved a signal and a lasting success. The Canadian Government Act enabled other British Colonies in North America to

join with Canada if they should desire to become a part of the new Dominion. The Province of Manitoba, lately made up of what had been the Hudson Bay Territories, was the first to throw in its lot with the Dominion. British Columbia and Vancouver's Island followed soon after, and Prince Edward Island obtained admission in 1873. Newfoundland held out, and still holds out, preferring so far its isolation as a province; but it may be expected that Newfoundland, too, will sooner or later join the federation. For a federation it has already become, and the Dominion of Canada stretches from ocean to ocean. The establishment of the federation was accomplished by the Bill for the Confederation of the North American Provinces of the British Empire, introduced by the late Lord Carnarvon in 1867. Lord Carnarvon was a man of intellect, who had taken a deep interest in the whole progress of the federation movement and who did his best to give full development to Lord Durham's scheme. Lord Carnarvon's measure proposed that the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, formerly called Upper and Lower Canada, together with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, should be joined together as the Dominion of Canada.

The Dominion was to have a Federal Parliament with local, or what would be called in the American Republic, State Legislatures. The Federal or Central Parliament was to be made up of a Senate and a House of Commons. The constitution of the Senate led to some serious objection during the debates on the Bill, for the plan of the scheme was that the

Senate should consist of seventy members nominated for life by the Governor-General on the part of the Crown. Much objection still prevails to this arrangement; and it is, perhaps, the weakest part of the scheme. Even if the House of Lords were altogether satisfactory in this country, which assuredly it is not, yet the conditions of the Canadian Dominion are not favourable to the idea of a second or Upper Chamber, removed altogether beyond the control of the Dominion populations. If the constitution of Great Britain and Ireland were now to be moulded for the first time, it is quite certain that nobody would think of setting up a second Chamber with the choice of whose members the electors had nothing to do. Of course the Dominion Senate is not a hereditary Chamber. Lord Carnarvon would have been the last man likely to adopt a project of that kind. But the essence of the principle on which the Canadian second Chamber is formed, is the Chamber's independence of popular control; and it would be no great rashness in prophecy to foretell that that principle cannot endure for very long. One effect of its existence already is to withdraw all public interest from the debates in the Dominion Senate, which represents nobody in Canada, and to fix it on the Representative Chamber. The Dominion House of Commons is composed by the people of the provinces, elected on a broad and liberal suffrage; and the period of five years is fixed for the duration of each Parliament. The Representative plan applied to the Canadian House of Commons is much the same as that which exists in the American Republic,

The Federal Parliament, the Dominion Parliament, manages all the affairs that are common to the provinces. Each province has its own local legislature, and makes its own local laws. The local laws vary according as the people of each province are influenced by their own local interests and local ideas. In some of the provinces the system of election is by ballot; in others the open vote still exists. The great underlying principle of the whole structure, however, is found in the fact that each province manages its own domestic affairs; and that the Parliament of the whole takes charge of the common interests. That is, indeed, the principle of federation; and it is a principle which seems likely to extend to other British Colonies as well as to those of North America. The idea did not begin with Lord Carnarvon, or even with Lord Durham himself; it had been suggested and urged from time to time by advanced thinkers and statesmen in the Colonies themselves. But it never assumed a definite form, never was more than a floating idea, until the Canadian Rebellion broke out, and Lord Durham was sent to report on the possibility of Canadian reconstruction. There was, in fact, but one course in three left for Canada. She must either remain completely under the control of the British Crown, in substance though not in exact form very much as what we call a Crown Colony now is; or she must become annexed to the United States; or she must start as an independent State on her own account. The first of these three courses proved itself at once to be completely out of the question, and does not

now enter into the minds of any serious politician on either side of the Atlantic. The second course, that of voluntary annexation to the United States, never has recommended itself much to the mind of Canada, although there was nothing in it which actually proclaimed itself an impossibility. When the United States were about to be formed into an independent Republic overtures were made to the Canadians to become a part of the great new Commonwealth, and provisions were arranged to keep the system open for the acceptance of the Canadian population. But there cannot be a doubt that there still is among the people of Canada a strong affection for the old country and the old flag, and the inclination to become a part of the American Republic seems to be diminishing rather than increasing with later years. It requires no great stretch of fancy to think of conditions which might force on the Canadian populations the desire to set up for themselves, and be free from the responsibilities and the burdens imposed on them by their connection with the British Crown. If, for example, England were to entangle herself in a series of foreign wars which might leave the shores of Canada open to the invasion of foreign enemies, in quarrels with which Canada had no manner of concern, it is quite within the compass of imagination to suppose that the colonists would at last grow impatient and would prefer to set up for themselves after the example of the United States. But then it is evident to the mind of every one that the policy of England during later generations has been to keep as far as possible out of

entanglements with Continental quarrels. In the event of an aggressive policy being directed against England, as in the case of the French Empire under the first Napoleon, it is not likely that the Canadian colonists would shrink from their share of the risk, responsibility, and cost. Still, this consideration of Canada's possible entanglement in a war policy with which she had nothing to do, and in the control of which she had no share, has been thought serious enough to warrant various projects for a closer federation between the Colonies and the Mother Country which should give the Colonies some direct representation in the Imperial Parliament and allow them thus to share in the direction as well as in the responsibility. No scheme has yet been put forward which seems to carry satisfaction, or even much plausibility, with it; but the very fact that such schemes are in the air is enough to show the progress we are making on the way to a possible federation of a closer and more intimate kind than any which actual legislation has hitherto contemplated. All that can be said, so far, is that Lord Durham's system has proved the germ of the development we have seen expanding itself more and more with every year; and that has now grown to be an Australian as well as a Canadian question. Lord Durham was a man of great ideas, but even he could not have fully known how great was the idea which he was putting into form and action, when he laid the foundation of the Dominion of Canada.

During later years the question of federation for the Australian Colonies has become a subject of

frequent and important public discussion. There are not three, but only two, courses open to these Colonies. There is no American Republic near at hand to suggest the possibility of annexation. Australia has only to choose between federation of some sort, or consolidation into the Imperial system. Now this last is a possibility which hardly needs to be taken into account. We are not speaking at present of that sort of consolidation which would be effected by a federal arrangement among the Australian provinces themselves, and afterwards by some form of direct representation in the Parliament of the Empire, and of direct share in the responsibilities of Imperial foreign policy. The sort of consolidation which we regard as outside the range of practical politics, is a consolidation which would recognise Australia's right to manage her own local affairs, but at the same time leave many of her most vital interests to depend upon the action of the Foreign Office at Westminster. The Australian provinces have outgrown that sort of consolidation. Australia now consists of five separate colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland; all these being portions of one vast island, the greatest island in the world. Then there are what we may call the Australasian Colonies—New Zealand and Tasmania—which might naturally enough be willing to attach themselves to the federation formed by the five great provinces of that Australian island. Each of these Australasian divisions has now its own representative Government, with responsible Ministries and a local Parliament.

New South Wales received its constitution in 1853; and for some years before that time had a peculiar kind of legislature made up of a single Chamber, half the members of which were appointed by nomination and the other half elected by popular suffrage. Victoria was separated from New South Wales in 1851, and obtained a liberal Parliamentary Constitution in 1856. The other Colonies followed, each in its turn, and became locally self-governing. The systems of legislature differ considerably among themselves, the electoral qualification for one province not being by any means the same as the electoral qualification for another. But they all, alike, are living examples of Representative Government, just as the several States of the American Republic are. The Australian Colonies are growing in population and in wealth, year by year, and it is quite understood at home that they are to manage their own affairs without the controlling intervention of the Colonial Office. One or two critical questions which arose in recent years in one or other of these provinces absolutely settled the principle that so far as regarded domestic affairs the Colonies are a law to themselves, and that no Colonial Secretary has a right to interfere with their decision. Indeed it would be no longer possible to imagine a group of such Colonies, divided from the Mother Country by many thousand miles of ocean, and trained to self-government by a generation of practice in the work, submitting to the direction or to the dictation of an English statesman at home, who, perhaps, came newly into the Colonial Office the week before last,

and may be out of it again by the week after next. The Australian Colonies, like the North American Colonies, are, therefore, virtually independent. If they were to declare themselves free of the Mother Country to-morrow, it is certain that no English Prime Minister in his senses would dream of compelling them by force of arms to return to their allegiance. The question, then, of the deepest interest is whether the Colonies will consent to remain just as they are, and will be content even with federation among themselves, or whether they will demand some manner of representation in the Imperial Councils of England, as a return for the responsibilities which their connection with the Empire undoubtedly forces upon them. The case of Australia is more simple than that of Canada, for there is no great foreign power on the other side of a frontier line which might threaten Australia with invasion, as the United States undoubtedly would threaten Canada if a war were to break out between England and the Republic. But on the other hand it is obvious that there might be a quarrel between England and some foreign power which would menace seriously the interests of Australia. At the time of the Crimean War it is certain that there was a project under consideration in Russia, the purpose of which was to make a diversion against England by an invasion of the Australian shores. Any one can easily picture to himself a condition of things in which the same sort of danger might arise again. Suppose, for instance, that England were to be forced into a quarrel with Russia because

of a rival policy in Chinese waters; what could be more possible, or even likely, than a Russian descent upon Australian shores, if only with a view to vex and harass England, and make it difficult for her to maintain her Imperial position? Suppose the same sort of quarrel were to arise in the same regions, between England and Germany, for example; might not the course of war take for a time an Australian direction? Now, nobody can doubt the pluck of the Australian Colonies, and the strength of their attachment to the connection with England; but the mere growth of the material prosperity in the Australian Colonies is only another reason why the colonists might object to have their peaceful shores turned anywhere into a battle-ground for the maintenance of a policy in whose origin and direction they were never consulted, and in which they had no manner of share. These are the dangers and the possibilities which have led far-seeing men, both here and there, to look forward to the creation of some federal plan, by means of which the Canadian and the Australian Colonies might be allowed a voice in the governing system of the Empire. No plan of any definite character has yet been brought under public consideration which seems to satisfy all the objects and all the interests concerned. How are Canada and Australia to have a voice in the Imperial Chamber? These Colonies, if represented in the House of Commons, must be represented on some principle of proportion—a proportion, let us say, according to population. But that, at a moment of crisis, might leave the voices of the Colonial Representatives to

be utterly overborne by the preponderance of voices coming from men who had no direct interest in the Colonies. That, however, does not seem to be a difficulty with which it would be quite beyond the wit of man to deal; and there have, indeed, been various schemes suggested to secure the solid right of representation by other ways as well as by that of election to the Imperial Parliament. At present the mind of Australia is much occupied by the mere question of federation among the Australian and the Australasian Colonies themselves; but no system of local federation could of itself meet the objection which is found in the fact that the Colonies are still liable to a share in the risks of a war when they have no share in the policy by which it is originated and guided. Some of our politicians, here at home, used to be fond of saying, at one time, that the solution is quite easy—that if the Colonies do not like us they can leave us and set up for themselves. We hear, of late, much less of this kind of talk; and for one reason or another there has been growing up a much stronger desire on the part of the people at home, and indeed of the people across the ocean as well, to do everything that can be done in order to maintain the connection between the Mother Country and the Colonies. Much of this feeling is due to the frequent intercommunication which is now taking place between the inhabitants of the Mother Country and the inhabitants of the Colonies. Men visit Canada, and even Australia now, as readily as their grandfathers would have visited France or Italy. The Canadians and the Australians come over here every season,

and take part in our great public ceremonials. England is growing more and more proud of her Colonies; proud of the prosperity they have made for themselves, of their increase in population, and in education—they have taught us many lessons, it may be observed, in popular education—in the great cities which are rising and have risen on the shores of what only a few generations ago were lonely and shipless harbours. The feeling is too good on both sides to leave any doubt on the mind that some arrangement can be come to which shall bring the Colonies and the Mother Country more closely into the union of one Imperial system, while leaving to each its absolute independence in the management of its domestic affairs. The principle of federation contains in it the solution of all the difficulty, and that principle of federation, so far as this Empire is concerned, began with the system which was devised by Lord Durham when he laid the foundation of the Dominion of Canada.

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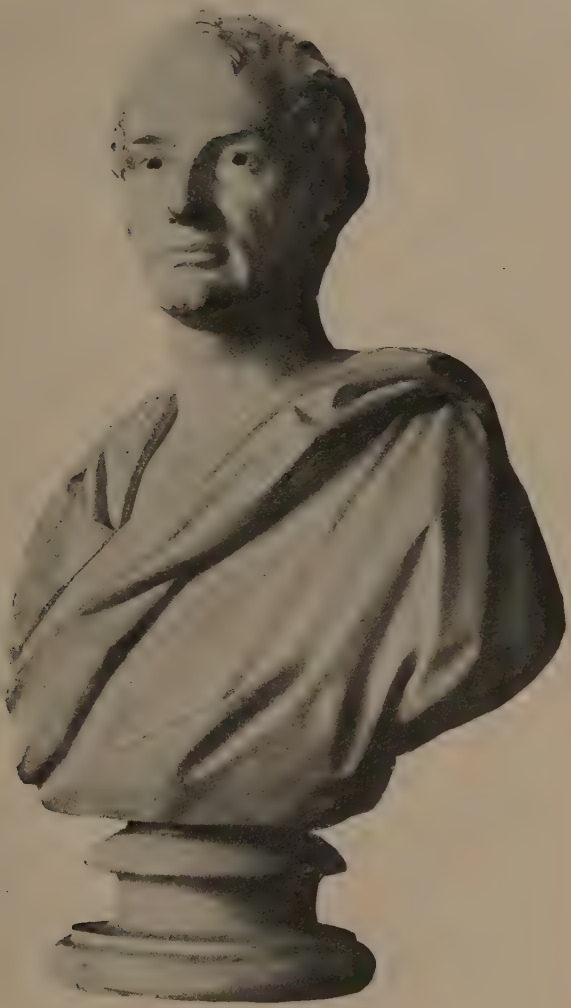
THE CHARTIST COLLAPSE

ONE of the most remarkable political developments in the earlier part of the Queen's reign took shape in the Chartist organisation. It had its birth in Birmingham, where but a very few weeks after the accession of Queen Victoria, a great Radical meeting was held and a manifesto was adopted which afterwards became known as the Chartist Petition. The Chartist Petition got its title from Daniel O'Connell. "There is your charter," O'Connell said when he read the petition; "stick to that;" and the title caught on, as the phrase now goes, and those who supported the petition became known thenceforward as Chartists. For a long time the Chartist movement agitated the whole country. Once or twice during its progress it seemed to threaten an upheaval of existing institutions; once at least it led to something like an outbreak on a small scale, and lives were lost in its support and in its suppression. It was, really, a revival of the agitation which had taken place before the passing of the Great Reform Bill, a re-birth of the movement which led to Peterloo. The great Reform Bill went as far as, under existing conditions, it could



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.
1792–1878.

be expected to go; but it did not go far enough to satisfy those classes in England who were most discontented, and who had the best cause for discontent. The Reform Bill left the whole mass of the wage-receiving class and of the agricultural population exactly as it found them; it gave votes to the middle class, and even to what might be called the lower middle class, but it left the great bulk of the male population wholly outside the pale of the Constitution. All that vast section of society were left as before, having nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. It seems strange now to understand how statesmen of the capacity of Lord John Russell, for example, could have thought that so large a proportion of the population could long be content to remain in such a condition. In truth the very passing of the Reform Act only tended to accentuate in the minds of such men the difference between their lot and that of the favoured minority. So long as political representation was kept as a luxury of the high-born and the wealthy, of the peer and the county squire, the artisans and peasants might possibly have gone on stolidly and patiently, without noticing the sharp line of distinction drawn between them and their betters, as the old familiar phrase would have put it. But when the shopkeepers in the cities and towns and the farmers in the counties became endowed with the right of representation and the power to give a vote in the choice of representatives, then it became impossible for the artisan and the peasant not to feel their exclusion bitterly, and to resent it and to rise against it.

The student of history has to make some allowance for the statesmen who carried the Great Reform Bill; to remember the immense difficulties they had in carrying even such a measure as that which they carried; and to bear in mind the fact that at that time the personal inclination of the Sovereign was still a factor of the utmost importance in settling the course of legislation. There must have been men in the ministry of Lord Grey—men like Lord John Russell, for example—who foresaw clearly enough that what they were doing could not amount to a permanent settlement of the political question, but who saw at the same time that just then it was out of their power to do any more. The Chartist agitation was confined, almost altogether, to the working classes in the cities and towns. The peasant in the counties was not stirred up till many years after to any keen sense of his political claims. Chartism, of course, like every other popular movement, had its inspiration in genuine grievance. Poverty and want of work were amongst its stimulants, and so, too, it may be frankly admitted, was a growing intelligence among the working classes. One of the idlest arguments that can be used by the satisfied men who have got, politically, all they want, is the argument that the power of voting at an election cannot help a man to higher wages or lead to a better distribution of the national wealth. The man excluded from the franchise remains as strongly as ever under the conviction that if he and his fellows had votes they could choose representatives who might find means by which to improve the arrangements of the social

organisation. No doubt there was much that was vague, much that was chimerical, much that was sentimental and fantastic in the Chartist agitation; but at the same time there was much in it that must be called reasonable, and which proved itself to be practicable, seeing that it carried its success in the end. The people's charter, as we study it now, does not seem like a manifesto which threatened to convulse the State. The Charter had six points, to use the phrase current at the time; the first point was manhood suffrage, or, as it was then called, universal suffrage, but which really only meant votes for all grown men, for the idea of woman suffrage had not yet dawned upon the mind of the British public. Thomas Carlyle was very angry with the phrase "manhood suffrage," and scornfully asked why the promoters of such a claim did not demand "doghood suffrage" as well? The appeal would have been more effective if men and dogs had belonged to the same order of being, but as they did not the scoffing argument fell flat. Manhood suffrage is substantially the law of Great Britain and Ireland just now, and has been so for many years. There, then, is the first point of the Charter disposed of. Annual Parliaments was the second point; and we have not got far towards the realisation of that claim, although the tendency undoubtedly is towards some narrower limitation of the duration of Parliaments than we have at present, and certainly no man would be regarded as an Anarchist or a Nihilist or a pestilent disturber of society who contended in our time that the sitting of a Parliament should last for only one

year. Vote by ballot was the third point of the formidable Charter ; and we have had vote by ballot for these many years back, and the Throne and the Altar still seem safe enough. Abolition of the property qualification was the fourth demand ; and the property qualification has long been abolished. Payment of members was the fifth claim ; and it is perfectly certain that before long some Government will introduce —will have to introduce—a Bill to establish some system for the payment of elected members, such as is adopted by almost all other civilised States. Equal electoral districts was the sixth and last demand of the Charter. Now the system of equal electoral districts prevails, as to numbers at least, in the American Republic and in some of our own Colonies, and it does not seem to bring political or social destruction in its track. Therefore we find that three out of the six points of the Charter have already been established by English law, that the concession of a fourth is actually on the way, that a fifth is likely to be carried in some modified form, and that the sixth is still fairly open for reasonable discussion.

As we have already seen, some of the principal points of the Charter were predicted as an absolute necessity by O'Connell and others when the Reform Bill of 1831 came up for debate. Therefore the dreams as they were then called and believed to be of the Chartists, have already been half realised ; and the other dreams, or most of them, seem to grow nearer to realisation with every succeeding year. Yet the Chartists of 1837 and the years that followed were undoubtedly regarded by steady-going people

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.
1806–1861.

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at the time as fanatical disturbers of society; men whose passion or whose craze was for the levelling of ranks and the redistribution of wealth; men with whom property was accounted robbery, and in whose eyes only the working man seemed to have any right even to existence. No doubt some of the Chartists were wild enthusiasts; some were half-crazy fanatics; some were idlers, and what would be called in the north country, wastrels—men who never did a day's hard work in their lives, and never wanted to go through any such process of labour. But the world has yet to hear of any great political agitation, even for the noblest public purpose, which is carried on exclusively by men of high education, by patriots and philosophers, and citizens with a respectable income earned or inherited. Among the Chartists were undoubtedly some men of great ability, eloquence, and high personal character; and the Chartist agitation produced at least one genuine poet, Ebenezer Elliott, who might have secured for his verses a more abiding place in literature if he had not devoted his poetic gifts to the inspiration of a movement which has long since done its work and become only a vague memory. Charles Kingsley's "Alton Locke" is probably not much in demand among novel readers of this day; it would be well worth reading if only for the light it throws on a fading chapter of history. "Alton Locke" gives, on the whole, a very fair as well as a powerful picture of the different kinds of men who composed the Chartist agitation, most of whom, whatever may have been their visions or their mistakes, were at least sincere. The Chartist move-

ment spread rapidly among the artisan classes. Thomas Cooper was, like Ebenezer Elliott, a man of poetic aspiration and likewise of much poetic inspiration; a man thoroughly devoted to his cause—an enthusiast indeed, but not a fanatic. Henry Vincent we can some of us still remember as a man of education and of ability, an eloquent and commanding speaker who, when the immediate occasion for the Chartist movement had passed away, maintained himself quietly and successfully as a popular lecturer at home and in the United States. Ernest Jones, too, is still well in the memory of many living men. Ernest Jones was a man of education and position who was held as an infant at the baptismal font by no less a person than a Royal Prince, and who deliberately sacrificed his chance of a rich inheritance by throwing in his lot with the Chartists and their agitation. The Charter had, indeed, among its leading supporters some men of less steady intellect and less orderly habits than those whom we have just mentioned. The present generation has almost forgotten the very name of the once famous or notorious Feargus O'Connor, about whom every newspaper published every day in these countries had at one time something to say in praise, in ridicule, or in denunciation. Feargus O'Connor was of good old Irish family, and used to boast, and with at all events somewhat better reason for the boast than Thackeray's Captain Costigan had, his descent from one of the Irish kings. He had been a man of fashion in London, a "buck" as it would have been called in those days, and had gone in for some showy dissipa-

tion. He was a man of colossal stature and almost gigantic strength, and was gifted with a voice hardly inferior in range and in music to that of O'Connell himself. Many men who had no sympathies with his movement, or admiration for himself, have described him as the most powerful mob orator they had ever heard. He had sat in the House of Commons for an Irish borough, but had quarrelled with O'Connell, who set himself against all socialistic theories. He threw in his lot with the Radicals, and more especially the Chartists of England, and obtained a seat in Parliament for the City of Nottingham. Among the large number of Chartist newspapers which were started, the *Northern Star*, which belonged to O'Connor, and was conducted by him, was probably the most influential and popular. The Chartists held incessant meetings, at which a great deal of violent rhetoric relieved and inflamed the passions of men. They took to the holding of torchlight meetings at night, and some of these demonstrations spread wild alarm in many an otherwise quiet neighbourhood. There were, roughly speaking, three classes of Chartists: the regular political agitators who went in steadily for the six points of the Charter and for nothing more, and who hoped to compass their ends, as indeed most of them afterwards were compassed, by open and constitutional agitation; then there were what might be called the Socialist Chartists—the men who thought the whole condition of society was wrong, and who wanted to turn it upside down in the hope that the general rearrangement of the order of things might bring everybody enough to

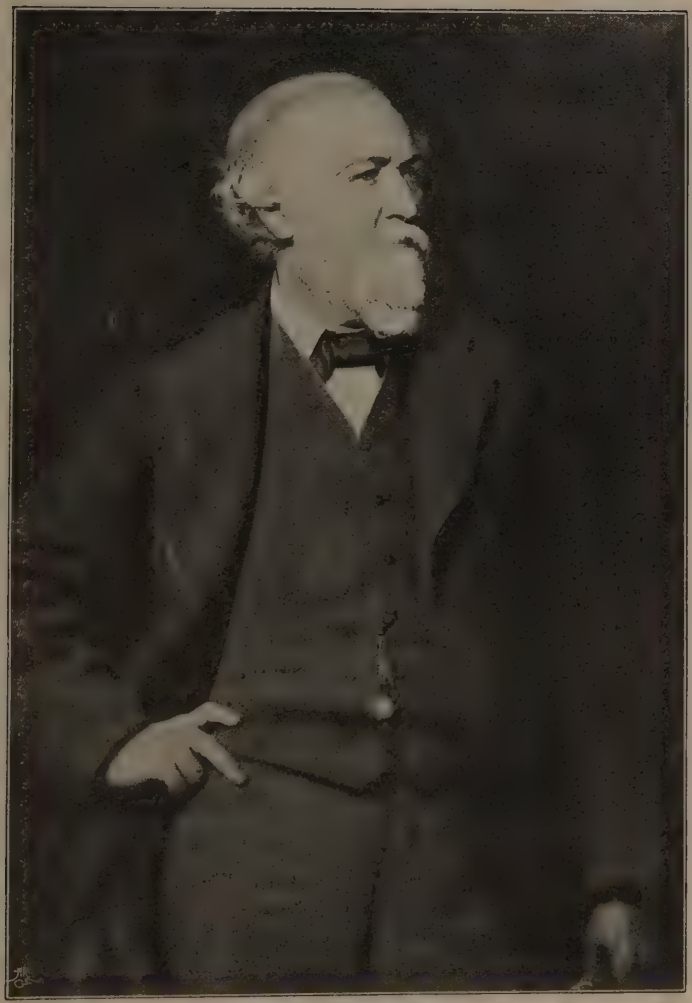
eat; finally, there were the men who were driven into Chartism by vague discontent, and by suffering that was not vague but very real and intense, and who attached themselves to Chartism because it promised to get rid of the bread tax, as it was called, and allured them with the hope of a fair day's wages for a fair day's work—not to speak of the considerable proportion whose yearning was for a fair day's wages without the day's work.

As the movement grew and grew, it divided itself again into the moral force and the physical force Chartists, as they were called at the time. The physical force Chartists openly proclaimed their utter disbelief in anything to be accomplished by peaceful agitation, and called out for an appeal to arms as the only possible way of bringing the movement to any success. None of the leaders we have mentioned, not even wild Feargus O'Connor himself, can be said to have had any faith in the Chartism of physical force; but there were some of them who did not venture to discourage and denounce it, fearing to lose if they did their influence over the mass of their followers. Nearly all were animated by the same distrust and hatred of the middle classes. The fury which raged against the aristocrats and the landlords at the time of Peterloo was now directed against the traders and the shopkeepers and the middle classes generally. The middle classes, it was insisted, not without some show of reason, had taken the help of the working men to carry the Reform Bill, and had joined in the conspiracy to leave the working men out of all the benefits of the measure. A Chartist

meeting was held in Birmingham, which the authorities of the place somewhat unwisely endeavoured to put down, and a serious riot took place which might have had disastrous results. Men like Ebenezer Elliott and Henry Vincent did their best to prevail upon all the Chartists to desist from thoughts and threats of physical force, but there were masses of the Chartists who had got far out of the range of such sensible and soberising advice. The Government took the usual course in such cases; they tried what could be done by criminal prosecutions. As always happens at a time of popular commotion, some of the very men were singled out for prosecution who had been doing their best to keep the movement within lawful bounds. Henry Vincent was one of these, and his imprisonment at Newport, in Wales, was the occasion of an organised effort at rescue which looked, indeed, very like the outbreak of an armed rebellion. Newport was the centre of a large mining population, and the miners there were nearly all Chartists of the physical force order. A march upon Newport was arranged, the object of which was to attack the gaol and liberate Henry Vincent and his Chartist companions in prison. The march was to be made by three separate divisions of men, who were to meet at a certain point, two hours after midnight, within easy reach of Newport. The whole plan was under the command of a person named Frost, a man who had up to this time borne a thoroughly respectable character, who was a well-to-do trader of Newport and had been a magistrate, but was removed from the Bench because of some violent political speeches

he had delivered. As happens almost always in such amateur arrangements, misunderstanding and delay intervened, and Frost arrived at Newport at the head of one division only. Another division followed, and the third did not arrive at the appointed place until the whole enterprise was practically over. In the meantime the authorities, fully prepared for the encounter, had met Frost and his division, and a conflict took place between the police and military on one side and the Chartists on the other. The Chartists were defeated and dispersed ; ten of them were killed and about fifty were wounded. Frost was arrested with some of his comrades in the enterprise, and they were tried in June, 1840, on a charge of high treason. The Chartists had been armed with guns, swords, pikes, and pickaxes, and their movement had at all events the appearance of something meant for more than a mere rescue of Vincent and his companions ; something, indeed, very like the beginning of an insurrection. Frost and two of his companions, Williams and Jones, were found guilty of high treason and were sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to one of transportation for life ; and even this was relaxed after the lapse of a few years, and Frost and his comrades were allowed to return to England.

What effect on the movement had the trial and condemnation of Frost, Williams, and Jones? Did the Chartists take warning from this assertion of the laws of authority and quietly abandon the agitation? Nothing of the kind. It would be but to misread the teachings of history if one were to suppose that any



ROBERT BROWNING.
1812–1889.

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popular cause with a real grievance behind it could be suppressed in such a country as England by mere prosecutions and sentences of transportation. What actually did happen was that the conviction of Frost and his comrades gave a new impulse to the Chartist movement. Thomas Cooper, for example, had never taken any particular interest in the Chartist movement and had never even seen a Chartist meeting until the trial of Frost called his attention to the fact that there was some seriousness in the movement, and that the Government had no idea of dealing with it except by the rough and ready process of criminal prosecution and imprisonment. The movement went on, and grew for years and years after Frost had been sentenced to transportation. We may as well anticipate its history and have done with it at once. It reached its climax, or indeed we should rather say its anti-climax, in 1848, when the Monster Petition, as it was called, was got up for presentation by Feargus O'Connor in the House of Commons. At that time the Chartists were suddenly reinspired by the influence of the Revolution in France which overthrew Louis Philippe and set up a short-lived Republic. It was arranged that a great demonstration should take place on Kennington Common, as it was then called—Kennington Park as it now is—an open ground on the south side of London, and that Feargus O'Connor should present a petition, which was to be adopted by the meeting, calling for the concession of the People's Charter. More than five millions of names, it was proudly boasted, were to be attached to the petition. London was thrown into a wild

alarm for some days before the Kennington Common demonstration, and a vast number of respectable citizens, more or less of the order of John Gilpin, were sworn in as special constables to maintain the security of the Throne, the Altar, and the Constitution. One of the special constables sworn in on that occasion, but who was by no means of the John Gilpin order, was Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, then an exile in London, and who, not long afterwards, stamped upon law and order at home and became Emperor of the French. The Chartist demonstration proved an utter and even a ridiculous failure. The Chartists quarrelled among themselves: some were for marching to Kennington Common with weapons in their hands, others were for an orderly and peaceful movement; and even Feargus O'Connor, with all his foolishness, would not listen to the idea of a physical force demonstration. So the movement broke into pieces, and the petition when presented was found to contain not "more than five millions," but much less than two millions of signatures, and many of these absurd forgeries intended to be merely grotesque and burlesque. The whole movement was extinguished in public ridicule. What had happened in the time between the conviction of Frost and the meeting on Kennington Common to lead to the failure of the Chartist movement? The Corn Laws had been abolished and bread had become cheap. Many measures had been passed to improve the education and the homes of the poor; a new constitutional era was proved to have opened; the House of Commons was growing more and more a representative institu-

JOHN RUSKIN.

1819–

tion ; it was clear to every intelligent observer that it was destined to become more and more representative still, and that the people could not for long be kept from their rightful share in the Government of the country. So the Chartist agitation withered and died because of improved laws and clearer hopes, and the dawn of a brighter and better political and social condition.

VI

STEAM, TELEGRAPH, AND POSTAGE

THE earlier years of Queen Victoria's reign saw the introduction of a number of scientific and industrial improvements in the world's social condition such as the whole history of the old world had not known. A new era, for which England and America may claim to divide the honours, came upon civilisation with a burst. The use of steam as the propelling power for ships and for carriages, became part of the real business of life about the time when English and American scientific men started the idea of sending messages by means of electric currents transmitted through metallic circuit. It is not necessary now to go into the question whether the priority of this idea belongs to Professor Wheatstone and Mr. Cooke on this side of the Atlantic, or to Professor Morse, the American electrician, on the other side. It is enough for us to know that the thought was put into words and into action on both sides of the ocean almost at the same time. England was beginning, and only just beginning, to be intersected by long railways. The London and Birmingham Railway was not opened through its whole

length until 1838. The line between Liverpool and Birmingham had been opened in the year before; the Liverpool and Preston line and the line between London and Croydon were opened shortly afterwards. The railway experiment had been tried over very limited lengths of line before that time, both in England and in the United States; but the real development and popularising of the railway system began in these countries with the first or second year of the Queen's reign. The Act of Parliament ordering the transmission of the mails by railway was passed in 1838. In the early part of the same year three steamers, the *Sirius*, the *Great Western*, and the *Royal William*, actually made voyages between this country and New York. The *Great Western* started from Bristol and arrived in New York after a voyage of fifteen days. The *Sirius* left Cork and got to New York in seventeen days. Now these were not by any means the first experiments in the application of steam to the propulsion of ships. The attempt had been made successfully, although of course within a limited range, in the United States for years before the *Great Western* crossed the ocean. For seven years the mail service from England to the Mediterranean had been conducted by means of steamers; but then there are steamers and steamers, and the first voyage of the *Great Western* settled once for all the question, which had been an open question up to that time. That question was whether a vessel could carry a quantity of fuel large enough to enable her to accomplish a voyage across the ocean, where there could obviously be no possibility

of taking in a new supply if the original supply were to fail in mid-Atlantic. It was proved by the example of the *Great Western* and the steamers which followed her, that a vessel could carry stowed away a supply of fuel amply sufficient to propel her from Liverpool or Bristol to New York. Then again it has to be said that the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* were not the first vessels which attempted to cross the Atlantic by means of steam. But they were the first vessels which attempted to cross the Atlantic by means of steam alone. A vessel called the *Savannah*, which was built at New York, had crossed the ocean to Liverpool nearly twenty years before; and an English built vessel made by the help of steam several voyages between Holland and her Dutch West Indian Colonies. But then in these instances the voyage was made merely by the assistance of steam—that is, the vessel got all the help she could out of her steam and the machinery for its propulsion; but she made good use of her sailing power also; and had now and then for long intervals to rely upon her sailing power alone. It will be seen, therefore, that these voyages belong to a totally different class of enterprise from that which was represented by the successful achievements of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western*. It would be impossible, where steam was used only as an auxiliary, to reckon either on the speed or the comparative certainty of arrival within a given time, which was aimed at by the projectors of the great steamship enterprise. The voyages of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* closed the whole controversy, which was never reopened; and within

two years after the first voyage of the *Great Western* the Cunard steamers were established and afloat, and steam communication between Liverpool and New York became as regular a part of the business of travel and commerce as the railway communication between London and Edinburgh. All this has since become so familiar to our minds and so completely a part of our social system, that we have long ceased to feel any manner of wonder at it, or even to take any account of it. In order to appreciate not merely the greatness, but the suddenness, of the change which revolutionised the world's travel, we have to bring up to our minds a recognition of the fact that living men saw the beginning of the one great change in the means of travel which the world has yet known. An Englishman in the days of Doctor Johnson travelled in just the same way as the Crusaders might have done. We do not mean to say that there were well-appointed mail coaches in the days of the Crusaders; but what we do mean to say is that in the days of the Crusaders men travelled just as fast as horses and sails could speed them, and no faster; and that in the first quarter of the present century the earliest signal was given that the whole system of travel was to be revolutionised. An Englishman of the present day would find himself much more awkwardly situated as regards travel and all means of intercommunication, if he were put back to the days of Doctor Johnson, than a man of Doctor Johnson's time would have felt if he could possibly have been put back to the days when the Romans began to make roads throughout Britain.

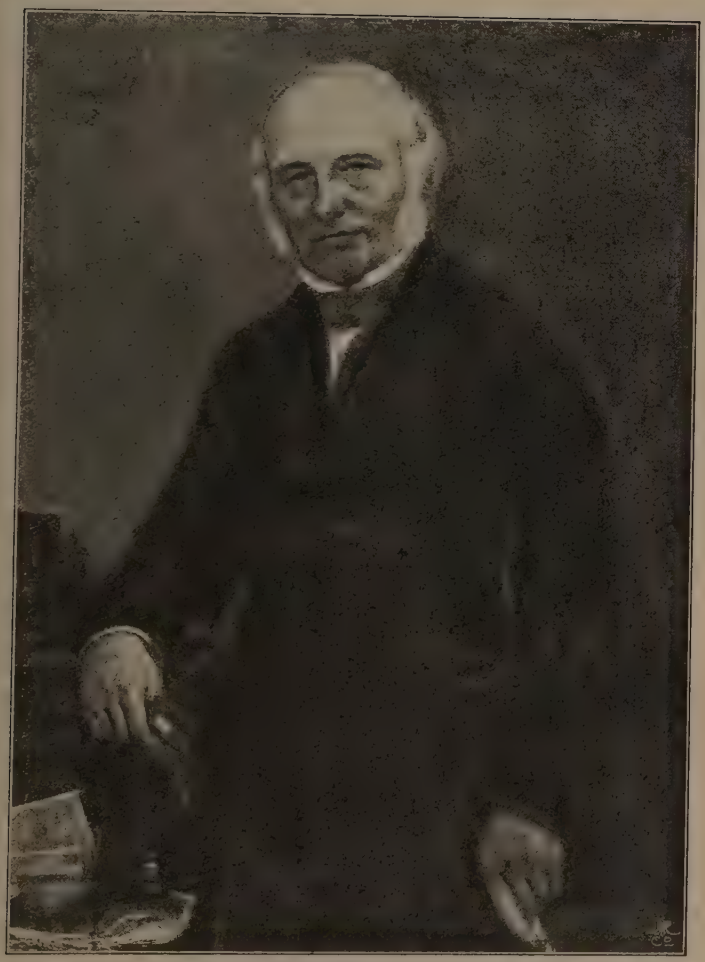
Many other scientific improvements in our social condition sprang into existence about the same time. The streets and houses of London in Johnson's day were lighted just as they might have been in the days of the Tudors, or for that matter in the days of the Romans. All that oil and tallow could do in the way of illumination was at the service of humanity at both periods alike. So far as drainage and ventilation were concerned, England had probably, on the whole, fallen off rather than made progress in the period between the time of Constantine and the period of Doctor Johnson.

On the 5th of July, 1839, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his usual financial statement, and it proved to contain an announcement which marks a new era in our social history. The Finance Minister announced his intention to propose a resolution declaring "that it is expedient to reduce the postage on letters to one uniform rate of one penny charged upon every letter of a weight to be hereafter fixed by law; parliamentary privileges of franking being abolished and official franking strictly regulated; this House pledging itself at the same time to make good any deficiency of revenue which may be occasioned by such an alteration in the rates of the existing duties." This was the official announcement of the introduction of the penny postage system. The rates of postage up to that time had varied according to distance, and according to the weight, or the size, or even the shape of a letter. The London post was a special and separate branch of the whole postal system, and the charge made for

letters delivered in the metropolis was on quite a different scale from that which prevailed throughout the provinces and the country. The average postal rate on every ordinary letter throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was about sixpence or a little more; but this must only be taken as the average rate. A letter from London to Brighton, for example, cost eightpence; from London to Aberdeen, one shilling and threepence halfpenny; from London to Belfast, one shilling and fourpence; the average of sixpence or something more, was only to be obtained by taking account of the letters sent across short distances in the country, and of the postal intercommunication of London itself. For even in those days of Doctor Johnson to which we have more than once referred, there was a penny post in the metropolis. Not only did additional weight greatly augment the postage on the letter, but if a letter were written on more than one sheet of paper it had to pay on a much higher scale of charge than one that was written on a single sheet. Then the franking system, as it was called, was a monstrous abuse of the public purse and the public patience. The franking system consisted of the privilege given to Members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown. A Member of Parliament had the privilege of franking letters to a certain extent, but there were some limits to his power; a Member of the Government had the right of franking without any limits at all. The very meaning of the word "franking," in that sense, is out of date and hardly understood in our time. It meant that the privileged person had only

to write his name on the outside of a letter in order to have it sent free through the post. Let it not be imagined that he had this liberal power only with regard to letters written by himself. He had but to scrawl his name on the outside of anybody's letter, and the missive was bound to go free of charge to any address within the limits of Great Britain and Ireland. The meaning of this was that a certain class of privileged person—the very class who least needed a bounty at the public expense—had the right of sending the letters of themselves and of their friends through the post for nothing. Naturally the poorer a man was the less likely he was to have acquaintances among Members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown; and as the cost of transmission of letters had to be made up to the Post Office Department somehow, the poor had imposed on them the duty of paying a heavier postal rate in order that the letters of Members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown might be sent free of charge. This would seem to us now a principle of postal arrangement only suited for one of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's comic pieces; but it was accepted as a matter of course and patiently submitted to by the public in the days before postal reform had set in.

One consequence of the heavy tax upon unprivileged letters was to set in motion a new and peculiar system of smuggling. We all have read of Will Watch the bold smuggler in the once popular ballad; and we used to read, or most of us used to read the story of the smugglers in Fenimore Cooper's novel "The Waterwitch"; and we can



ROWLAND HILL.
1795–1879.

remember when the smuggling of brandy and tobacco went freely on, and the smuggling of lace and diamonds is not even yet altogether unknown to the authorities of the New York Custom House. But it would not readily occur to an ordinary reader at the present day, to understand what was meant by the smuggling of letters. This version of the trade of Will Watch and "The Waterwitch" was, however, perfectly familiar to England up to the early days of Queen Victoria's reign. Secret organisations sprung up all over these countries, for the unlawful conveyance of letters at rates lower than those levied by the Government and the Post Office authorities. The owners of almost every sort of public conveyance are believed to have lent themselves to this traffic; and it is difficult now for us to find it in our hearts to condemn them too sternly for such unlawful practice. But it was not merely to avoid paying the heavy postage rate that these ingenious and illicit devices were made use of to cheat the Post Office authorities. It has been mentioned already that there was a heavy extra charge on a letter which contained more than one sheet of paper; and the Postal officials were constantly in the habit of breaking the seals of letters and opening them, in order to find out whether or not they ought to be charged upon the higher rate. The owners of great business houses were naturally very reluctant to have their letters opened and read for such a purpose; and they were naturally unwilling also to pay what seemed to be an unreasonable rate of postage. Therefore, it appears to have been clearly

established by evidence that several of the greatest commercial firms in London and Manchester and, of course, in other cities and towns as well, were in the habit of having the great bulk of their correspondence conveyed by the smuggling system. The revenues of the Post Office began to fall off steadily, while the country was everywhere increasing in population and in wealth. The abuse lasted, as all abuses do, until the man predestined to be a great reformer came up to abolish it. The reformer in this instance was the late Sir Rowland Hill. Mr. Hill, as he then was, belonged to a family of philanthropists and reformers. He had even when a child a genius for arithmetical figures; and his delight from his boyish days in arranging and dealing with masses of figures first turned his attention to the number of letters passing daily through the Post Office, to a comparison between the number of letters and the number of the population, and to what ought to have been the actual cost of conveying them, as compared with that charged by the authorities of the Post Office. Miss Martineau tells the story of an incident which came to the knowledge of Rowland Hill and which gave his mind a direction in the way of Post Office reform. "Coleridge," says Miss Martineau, "when a young man was walking through the Lake District, when he one day saw the postman deliver a letter to a woman at a cottage door. The woman turned it over and examined it, and then returned it, saying she could not pay the postages which was a shilling. Hearing that the letter was from her brother, Coleridge paid the postage in

spite of the manifest unwillingness of the woman As soon as the postman was out of sight, she showed Coleridge how his money had been wasted as far as she was concerned. The sheet was blank. There was an agreement between her brother and herself that as long as all went well with him, he should send a blank sheet in this way once a quarter; and she thus had tidings of him without expense of postage." Rowland Hill went to work on the hint given by this pathetic little story; and he worked out in his own mind a plan of postal reform which has since captured the whole civilised world. The key-note of his system was found in the fact which his calculations had made clear to him, that the actual cost of sending letters through the post was very small; and that the distance over which letters had to be carried counted for comparatively little when once a regular postal system was in existence. Rowland Hill issued a pamphlet entitled "Post Office Reform, its Importance and Practicability," in which he laid down the principle of his scheme, and thoroughly worked out its details. His idea was that the price of the conveyance of letters should be reduced to its lowest possible scale; that the speed of communication should be increased; and that the periods of dispatch should be greatly multiplied—in fact that the object of the Post Office authorities ought to be to encourage and develop to the very utmost the public desire for intercommunication by letter. Here, in the very principle of his reform, he found himself greatly in antagonism with the principle on which the Post Office authorities had

always, up to that time, been acting. We have mentioned already, that even in the later years of Canning and of Huskisson, there were Finance Ministers whose only idea of how to increase the revenue from some public impost was to double the amount of the impost itself. The Postal authorities were following the same track. Their notion was that the higher the charge for the delivery of a letter, the greater would be the return to the Post Office revenue. Rowland Hill began with the assumption that the cheaper you make the postal delivery, the greater in the long run will be the profit to the Post Office. It does not seem to have occurred to many people before Rowland Hill's time, that while after all there are few luxuries more precious than the luxury of interchanging ideas and news between far divided friends by letter, there is nothing that compels the majority of men to write any letters that are not wrung from them by actual necessity. Men must pay for their food or starve, no matter how high the cost of the food may be; but no man is compelled to write letters, if the cost of postage seems to him too heavy for his means. Rowland Hill was convinced that if the transmission of letters were arranged for at a cheap and uniform rate, thousands, hundreds of thousands, and even millions of people would write frequent letters, who had written very few letters indeed, or no letters at all, while the high rate of charge was maintained. He advised the Postal authorities to adopt one uniform charge of one penny the half-ounce for all letters sent anywhere within the limits of Great

Britain and Ireland. The Post Office authorities, it is needless to say, met the proposal at first with indignant and resolute opposition. The Postmaster General of the time denounced the scheme as the wildest and most extravagant he had ever heard. Still one might have expected opposition from the head of the Post Office Department in those days; but one is surprised to find that so bright an intellect as that of Sydney Smith should have seen no hope whatever for the success of Rowland Hill's proposal. Sydney Smith not only spoke with contempt of the scheme, but with wrath and sorrow of the Whig Ministry, who showed themselves on the whole disposed to favour it, or at least to risk a little money in giving it a fair trial. A Committee of the House of Commons was appointed which examined the whole subject most carefully, and finally made a report adopting Mr. Hill's scheme altogether, so far as it recommended a uniform rate of charge according to weight and prepayment by postage stamps.

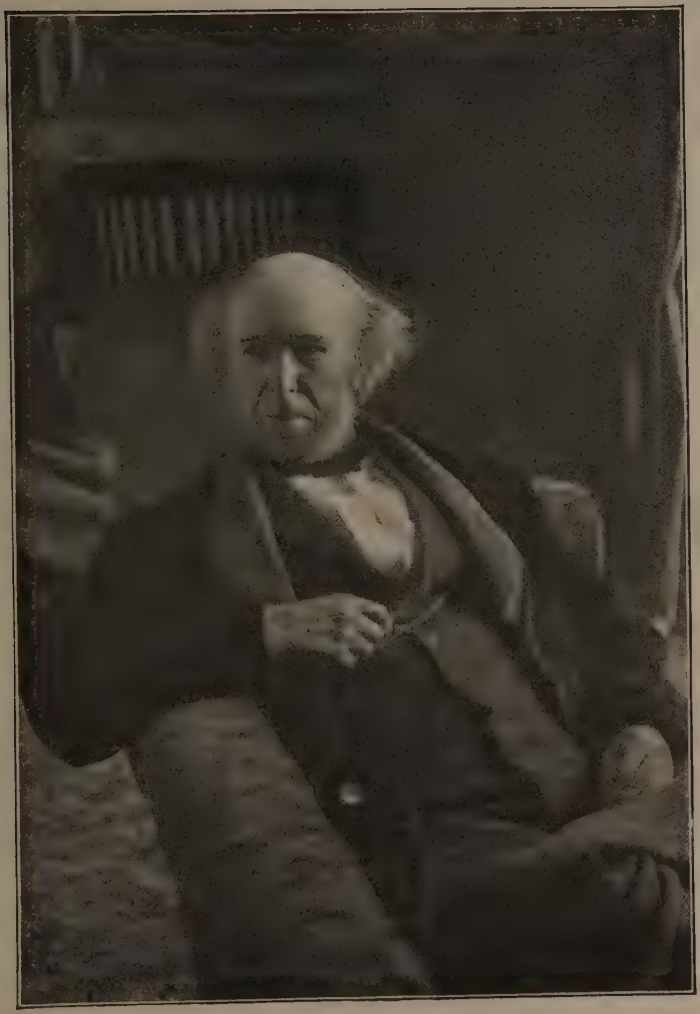
The Government took up the scheme with energy and courage. Although the revenue that year had shown some falling off, yet it was wisely determined by the statesmen in office that it would be well to run any risk of a further deficiency which the proposed reform might involve. In the meantime, the commercial community caught at Mr. Hill's scheme with almost unanimous approval and delight. Petitions poured in from all the great cities and towns in support of the plan and urging the Government to give it at least a fair trial. Em-

boldened by this encouragement, the Government made up their minds to bring in a Bill which should accept the principle of Mr. Hill's scheme and the recommendation of the Committee, both as regards the uniform rate of postage, and the prepayment by stamps; and also providing for the abolition of the franking system, except in the case of official letters sent out on business directly belonging to Her Majesty's service, just the order of exception which prevails in the present day. The Government went to work cautiously and gradually, as regarded the postal charge, although their cautious and gradual movement created a wild consternation in all good old Tory circles, and indeed amongst men who were not Tories in any political sense of the word. The Bill introduced by the Government was described as merely an introductory measure; and it proposed that the charge for postage should be at the rate of fourpence for each letter under half an ounce in weight, delivered anywhere within Great Britain and Ireland. This introductory measure was carried through both Houses of Parliament, though not in either House without some strenuous opposition. In the House of Lords it was condemned by the Duke of Wellington in the strongest way as an imprudent and half-crazy proposal which could only end in heavy loss to the revenue, without doing any particular good to anybody. But the Duke's bark was often worse than his bite; and in this instance he announced, that as the Government had evidently set their hearts on this absurd scheme, he felt compelled to advise the House of Lords to throw the

responsibility of failure on the shoulders of her Majesty's Ministers and let the measure pass into law. In the House of Commons, so great a financier and so enlightened a statesman as Sir Robert Peel was found to condemn the Government proposal, on the ground of the immense loss it must entail on the revenue. The Bill became law; and the measure worked so well in practice, that at the opening of January, 1840, the postage was fixed at one penny for every letter not more than half an ounce in weight, delivered in the United Kingdom. So immediate was the effect of the cheap postage upon the correspondence of the country, that while in 1839, the last year of the old-fashioned postage rate, the number of letters delivered in Great Britain and Ireland was hardly more than eighty-two millions, including more than five millions and a half of franked letters which paid nothing to the national revenue, in 1875, more than a thousand millions of letters were delivered in Great Britain and Ireland, and the population in the meantime had not nearly doubled itself. It need hardly be said, that the principle of Sir Rowland Hill's reform has since been adopted in every civilised country all over the world. Ever since his scheme was put into operation we have had continual alterations, either of the rate of charge or of the weight to be carried for the reduced charge, or of both together. International Conventions have been held, again and again, with the object of reducing and equalising the postal rate. There has been a generous rivalry among all countries to bring down

the charge for the delivery of letters to the lowest possible amount. For years and years there were varying scales of charge for the transmission of letters between England and her own Colonies, not to say between England and foreign countries. Now we can send a letter, not exceeding four ounces in weight, to any part of Great Britain and Ireland for one penny; and we can send a letter, not exceeding half an ounce in weight, that is to say, an ordinary four-page letter, to almost any part of the globe, at a charge of twopence halfpenny. There can be little doubt that before long Sir Rowland Hill's dream, as people once thought it, of an inter-oceanic post at the cost of a penny stamp will become a reality. Long after the enthusiasm about Hill's scheme had died away, there were men like the late Elihu Burritt, the American philanthropist and reformer, who pressed for an inter-oceanic penny post and failed to see their wishes accomplished in their time. We may safely assume now, that before long we shall be able to send a letter from London to San Francisco, or from London to Sydney, at the same rate of postal charge as that which Rowland Hill was thought a madman for trying to apply to letters sent from one part of the United Kingdom to the other.

The developments of science have in many ways made even the reform in the postal system seem poor and prosaic by comparison. The telegraph system began to expand almost at the same time with the popularisation of travel by steamships and railways. At first, the communication by telegraph only applied to messages sent from one part of an island or a



HERBERT SPENCER.
1820–

continent to another, or at most to messages despatched across narrow channels of sea. But there came a time when an enterprising American, the late Mr. Cyrus W. Field, a business man rather than a scientific man, started a project for laying a telegraph cable across the bed of the Atlantic. Most of us can remember the interest, the eagerness, the hope, the doubt, the incredulity, the curiosity with which the progress of this scheme was followed ; how the cable was laid at last under the waves of the Atlantic, and messages were transferred at lightning speed from New York to London and from London to New York ; and how the messages suddenly ceased and the cable was silent. Then it was found that the great wire had parted in the bed of the ocean ; and a new expedition had to be fitted out to seek for the severed strands of the cable and to knit them together ; and at last, on July 27, 1866, the Atlantic telegraph became the complete success over which we have all now forgotten to wonder. Then there followed, as a matter of course, systems of communication connecting by land and by ocean the countries of Europe with China and Japan, with Melbourne and Sydney, with the Cape of Good Hope and the islands of the Pacific. Scientific men have all the time been experimenting in schemes which should accomplish a telegraphic intercommunication without even the need of the connecting wires and cables ; and only a rash man indeed could venture to say that such experiments are not destined to achieve any success. Then we have the telephone brought by the inventive genius of Mr.

Edison and other men to such a system of practical working order that people in their offices, in every civilised country, can enter into conversation with friends or agents hundreds of miles away. All this, if it could have been talked of seventy years ago, would have seemed but the extravagance of a frenzied imagination, far surpassing that which ever inspired the poet's most fantastic dream. There are other wonders, of course, in the development of modern science—wonders that work in the remedy of pain, in the healing of disease, in the production of rays which enable the surgeon to see through to the injured bone of his patients ; these and other marvels of applied science, not less surprising or less beneficial in their way than anything that has been accomplished by steam and wire and ocean cable and the tube of the telephone. But we have been dealing only with these latter wonders, and make no pretence at anything like a comprehensive description of what science has done for the world in these later days. We have only, then, to ask our readers to consider what they think our old friend Doctor Johnson, if we may refer to him once more, would have said, had he been told that the Englishmen of a few generations to come could leave Liverpool on one Saturday and breakfast in New York the Saturday after ; could send a message from New York to his friends in England to assure them of his safe arrival, which message would only take a few minutes in its transmission ; could talk from London with a friend in Edinburgh at something like the ordinary rate of persons conversing in the same

room ; and would have a postal system which could take letters all over the world at a cost of twopence halfpenny, and would by reason of its very cheapness make the Post Office one of the best paying departments of the State. Nearly all these great changes have come to pass during the present reign ; and the strange thing about them is that they came not gradually and slowly, but all at once, flooding the world with a new and sudden dawn, which had given hardly any preliminary rays to herald its emerging from the darkness. The world had travelled at the same rate of speed, and sent its communications at the same rate of speed, for thousands of years, during which science, in some form or other, was working ; during which, intellect and imagination had reached a height that can never be surpassed ; and yet it was reserved for the early years of the second quarter of the present century to see the sudden growth which we have been endeavouring to describe. Perhaps no other phenomenon quite equally strange is to be noted in the history of the world.

VII

"THE STOCKDALE CASE"

THE celebrated case of Stockdale against Hansard calls for a special notice. It became historical, and, indeed, it marked an epoch in the history of the House of Commons. No other such curious complication has arisen in modern times—no such direct antagonism had been known before or is likely to be ever known again, between the rights of the House of Commons and what seemed at the first consideration to be the rights and interests of the public in general. The facts are simple, and the story is easily told and will be easily understood. The Messrs. Hansard were then and are now the recognised printers for Parliament; and in 1840 they had printed and published certain Parliamentary Reports on Prisons, in the course of which it so happened that a book published by J. J. Stockdale, and found in some of the prisons, was condemned in the strongest terms. Stockdale at once proceeded against the Messrs. Hansard and claimed damages on the ground that they had printed and issued a libel upon him. The Hansards in their defence

pleaded the authority of Parliament for the publication; but Chief Justice Denman, before whom the case came on for trial, decided that the House of Commons, being only one of the two Houses of Parliament, had no authority of its own to sanction the publication of libels against private citizens, and out of this decision arose a quarrel which at one time became a great public scandal. The House of Commons formally insisted on its privileges and would not give them up. The Law Courts held by the decision of Chief Justice Denman and would not admit that there was any parliamentary authority to shelter the Messrs. Hansard. It will be observed that Chief Justice Denman did not in any way set himself against the authority of Parliament; he only insisted that the House of Commons did not constitute Parliament, and had not of its single power any right to sanction the publication of a libel. As the law then stood it would appear that the Chief Justice was in the right, nor was he in the least likely to give any judgment which could pretend to set aside the over-ruling power of Parliament. Everybody will understand that a Member of Parliament speaking in the House of Commons and keeping within its rules of order cannot be proceeded against for any statement that he makes there in good faith, no matter how severely it may criticise the words or the actions of any private individual whose case has been brought under the notice of the House. In fact, it would be impossible to conceive of the utility, or even of the existence, of a House of Commons in

this country whose members were not free to express their opinions on any case brought up for discussion. Judgment was given by default against the Hansards in one of several actions for libel which arose out of the whole question and the decision of the Courts of Law. The Sheriffs of London were directed to seize and sell some of the property of the Hansards in order to satisfy the demands of the plaintiff in one of these actions. Nothing could be more embarrassing than the position in which the Sheriffs of London thus suddenly found themselves placed. They were ordered by the Court of Queen's Bench to seize the property, and if they had refused to do so that Court would undoubtedly have directed their committal to prison for their refusal to obey the command. But, on the other hand, if they touched the property of the Hansards they would have been acting in contempt of the privileges of the House of Commons; and the Speaker would be sure to order their committal to Newgate. That theirs was no imaginary difficulty soon became known to the public. Messrs. Hansard paid in to the Sheriff's Court the amount of damages claimed; but they paid it under protest. The House of Commons ordered the Sheriffs to refund the money to Messrs. Hansard; and the Sheriffs were committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms for acting in contempt of the privileges of the House of Commons. The House, through its Speaker, directed the Sergeant-at-Arms to make known to the Court that he held the Sheriffs in custody by the express order of the Representative Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms took

EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN.
1823–1892.

the Sheriffs with him as captives into the Court of Queen's Bench, and made his announcement there; and the Court did not see its way to interfere directly; and so the Sergeant-at-Arms marched off in triumph with his municipal captives following in his wake. The whole business created immense public excitement not unmingled with loud outbursts of popular laughter. A dilemma more ridiculous and more unseemly it would be hardly possible to conceive. The curious fact was that public opinion at first was almost altogether in favour of the Law Courts and of the captured Sheriffs. The general impression for awhile seemed to be that it was simply a struggle between the rights of private individuals and what appeared the arrogant claim of the House of Commons to over-rule law and order and all civil rights.

Especial and very general sympathy was felt with the unfortunate Sheriffs, who had done nothing more than to carry out the orders of the Court of Law, and who, if they had not been put in prison by one of the great conflicting authorities would most certainly have been put into prison by the other. There was no way out of the whole unseemly dilemma but by some legislative action, and the Government took prompt steps to settle the matter in that way. On March 3, 1840, Lord John Russell brought in a Bill to afford full protection to all persons employed in the publication of Parliamentary papers issued and authorised by either of the two Houses. Lord John Russell's Bill set forth in its preamble that "whereas it is essential to the due

and effectual discharge of the functions and duties of Parliament that no obstruction should exist to the publication of the reports, papers, votes or proceedings of either House as such House should deem fit, it should be lawful for any person or persons against whom any criminal proceedings on account of such publication should be taken, to bring before the Court a certificate of the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker stating that it was published by the authority of the House, and the proceedings should at once be stayed." The measure was passed very quickly through both Houses, although some grumbling was made in the House of Lords, and it became law on April 14th. The Sheriffs and other prisoners were discharged from custody, and the whole public excitement soon settled down into quietude. The common sense of the country decided the question in favour of the House of Commons, and it is now the rule of the law, as well as of parliamentary usage, that either House of Parliament may authorise the publication of its debates, its papers, and its orders without let or hindrance from any court of law. No grievance whatever that the public could be inclined to complain of has arisen since from any misuse of parliamentary power; nor, even if any such misuse were probable or possible, could any evil arising from it have approached in any degree to the magnitude of the evil which must come from any law that restricted the publication of the parliamentary papers. No great reform for the benefit of the public in general could have ever been passed through Parliament if it were in the power of private

individuals, who believed that their interests might suffer from such a reform, to bring actions against members of either House for their speeches on the subject, or against the parliamentary printers for publishing the authorised papers of either House, containing all the information needed for an accurate judgment on the necessity of the reform. Take, for instance, the legislation to abolish slavery in our Colonies. Think of the details which had to be brought out in such debates, the descriptions of the lives led by some of the slaves in the Colonies, of the manner in which certain owners of plantations overworked and flogged and branded their slave men and their slave women, and think what possibility there would be of carrying such a reform if the mere publication of the proceedings were to subject the parliamentary printers to damages, or to criminal prosecution, for libel. Think of the legislation pressed forward and carried by men like Lord Shaftesbury to protect women and children from ill-treatment, and let us ask ourselves how such legislation could possibly have been carried if it were in the power of every mine-owner, and every factory owner, to prevent the public from obtaining any accurate knowledge of the systems actually existing. The poor climbing boy in the chimney might have been followed by other climbing boys to this day, under the same abominable system, if the House of Commons were not free to conduct its debates and publish its papers without the intervention of the Courts of Law, set in motion by some master-sweep. The poorer the victim, the more

helpless the class of victims, the greater becomes the necessity that those who endeavour to have justice done to them shall not be subjected to actions or prosecutions for libel, started by the very wrongdoers whom Parliament is trying to deprive of their unjust powers. Nor is this the most serious consideration involved in the whole question. Men like Lord Shaftesbury, and others equally philanthropic and equally brave, might have defied all terrors of civil and criminal action; but how were they to be supported by the public out of doors if the public were not allowed to get at the parliamentary papers, on which they rested their claim for justice and humanity? The legislation introduced and carried by Lord John Russell set each House of Parliament free to instruct the public, and to invite the co-operation of the public, in every measure of philanthropic reform; and the final settlement of the case against Messrs. Hansard carried with it the triumph of parliamentary freedom, and secured the right of men in either House of Parliament to turn the full light of publicity on the darkest evils of our social system.

VIII

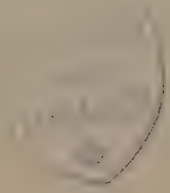
THE OPIUM QUESTION

BEFORE entering on the somewhat lengthy story of the Opium question, and the wars with China which came of it, it is pleasant to have to record one bright and happy event—the marriage of Queen Victoria. The Queen was married on February 10, 1840, to Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, afterwards created Prince Consort. It was a love match in every sense of the word, and not many love matches have turned out so happily. The Queen and her husband had congenial souls and intellects. They thought together on most subjects, political and general. They had a long line of descendants, and their happiness was hardly broken until the early and sudden death of the Prince Consort, nearly twenty-one years after their auspicious marriage.

The reign of Queen Victoria inherited a dispute with the Government of China—a quarrel about the trade in opium. The reign very soon came in for an opium war with China. England, of course, had the best of the struggle, and the Chinese had nothing for it but to submit and to pay a war ransom amounting

in all to nearly six millions sterling. What was it all about? The story is somewhat curious, and can hardly be said to redound to the honour of England's nineteenth century. China is a country of vast extent, and occupied by a population the exact numbers of which it is difficult to arrive at, but which may be roughly taken at somewhere approaching to four hundred millions of people. China has a civilisation all her own, and a civilisation stretching so far back to antiquity that the history of the development of Greece, or even of Egypt, seems quite a modern story by comparison. At no time to which any authentic annals can reach back could the Chinese be called, in the strict sense of the word, an uncivilised people. They had laws and literature, faith, morals, and a system of government. In one sense, and within their own vast domains, they were always what must be called a practical people; but they were the merest of dreamers in their ambition to shut out from sight and knowledge all evidences of the growth of other peoples, and of different forms of civilisation. The one great wish of the Chinese people was to be let alone, to be allowed to go their own steady way undisturbed by that dreadful thing, of which they had vaguely heard, called modern progress, and to let a vain and giddy outside world go its way of trade and conquest provided it did not molest their shores. Especially the Chinese were anxious not to have any dealings with States as States. In modern days the knowledge of traders and trading companies was forced upon them, and being a shrewd people

PRINCE CONSORT.
1819–1861.



who did not object to a little gain they were not unwilling to deal with the private trader. Even this concession, however, to the spirit of the times was only wrung from them after much resistance; and the whole history of European trade in its early stages is full of severe, offensive, and sometimes barbarous conditions which they imposed on European traders who desired to have any dealings with them. The Chinese did not want our literature or our arts; they had a literature and an art of their own which had, at all events, the merit of entirely satisfying them, and they did not want to learn anything from us, because they were perfectly and comfortably satisfied that they had nothing to learn. Owing to the vast extent of the country and to its enormous population, China was a tempting ground for all the adventurous traders of what may be called, for the sake of clearness, the civilised world. The East India Company soon converted parts of China into a trading ground; and the East India Company grew an immense quantity of opium which it was eager to sell to the Chinese population. Opium smoking was, and to some extent still is, the native vice of China, and Chinese Governments made many efforts to prevent the importation of the drug into their communities. In truth and fact the opium trade was the cause of our war with China; and the principle for which England fought was the alleged right of Great Britain to force the opium trade upon China despite all the efforts of the Chinese Government, and all the protestations of whatever public opinion there was in the nation independent of the

edicts of the Government. It is not to be supposed that this was the avowed motive of the war on the part of England, but this was assuredly the question which was at stake. The British traders, especially those who came within the domain of the East India Company, insisted on pushing the traffic ; the Chinese Government resisted their attempt, and England fell back upon her right to protect her subjects in China as well as in any other land.

No doubt the Chinese authorities sometimes had recourse to measures which could hardly be justified by international law ; but then the Chinese did not want to have anything to do with international law, and did not admit the right of foreign nations to devise out of their own heads, as the children say, a system of law which was to govern China without regard to any consent on the part of China herself. The East India Company was then practically a self-governing Company with purely nominal control on the part of the Sovereign and Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. The East India Company was always committing England to some manner of policy about which the people at home had never been consulted ; and the English Government generally felt bound to stand by the East India Company in the end. India was still the country where great fortunes were gathered, the country where the rich uncles of literature and the drama made their money and to which the great expectations of English families very commonly turned. As human nature is constituted it becomes very easy for most of us to find excuses for the traffic out of

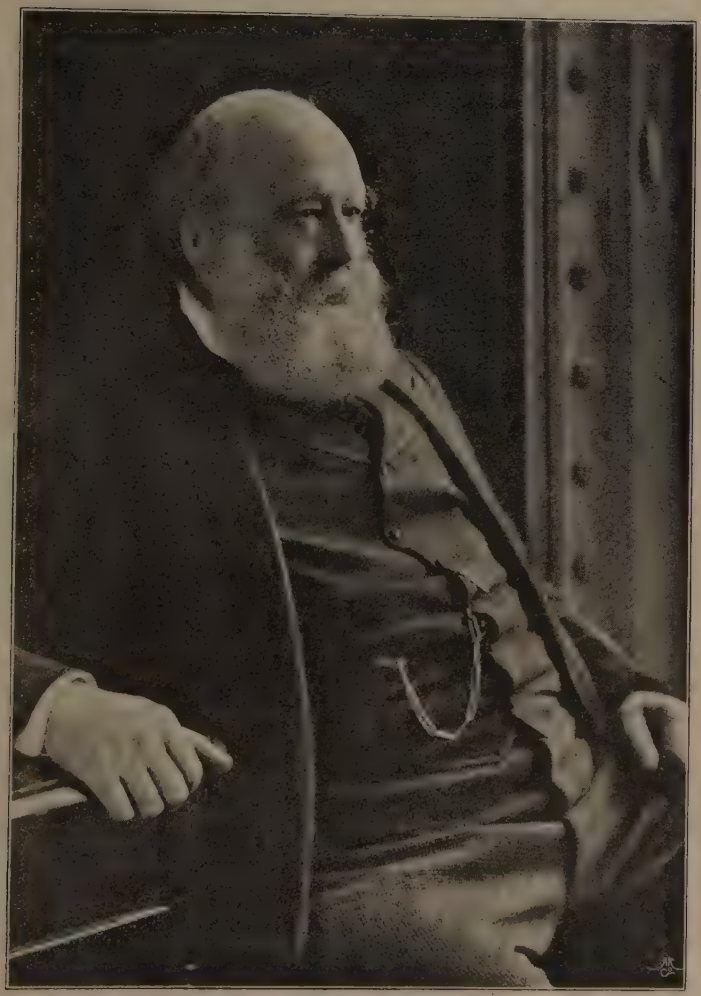
which our uncles are to become wealthy and of whom we are to be in great part the heirs. Therefore there are many excuses to be made for the opium traffic and for the wars which it engendered, which carried at the time a good deal of popular approval with them and lent strength to what might have been called, if the phrase had then existed, the forward policy with regard to China. Many public men in these countries contended that the opium trade was not nearly so bad a traffic as the philanthropists and moralists and other intrusive persons tried to make it out. The practice of inhaling opium, it was argued, was not so bad as the practice of whisky drinking or gin drinking among our own populations at home. Opium, according to many champions of the traffic, was indeed a refreshing and on the whole rather a healthy practice, and besides, if the Chinese Government did not like it why did not they take proper measures to stamp out the growth of the poppy at home instead of trying to interfere with the trade of the East India Company? The Chinese Government, indeed, were charged with having no higher purpose in view than to keep a monopoly of the well-paying traffic in their own hands, and to prevent the East India Company and other traders from coming in for any share of the game. All this kind of argument, it will be seen, had absolutely nothing to do with the real question at issue. The one great principle to be settled was, whether any Government has a right to force on any other Government a traffic which it publicly condemns and declares unlawful. Whether any particular Chinese

Government was influenced solely by the loftiest considerations of morality, whether some of the Chinese authorities were or were not themselves dabbling in the denounced traffic, whether no Chinese Government had ever gone beyond the limits of fair remonstrance and proper precaution in endeavouring to keep out the foreign traders, are questions wholly irrelevant to the material points of the controversy. No one now, who happens to be in his senses, would contend that any European Government has a right to force the American Government, supposing even that it had the power, to receive European spirits and European wines free of duty; or that the claim to such a right would be in the slightest degree more plausible even if it could be surmised that certain officials at New York had made a personal profit out of smuggling transactions. The State of Maine in the American Republic enacts, as its laws entitle it to do, that no spirituous liquids of any kind shall be sold within the precincts of the State; would anybody suggest that any foreign Power has a right to compel the authorities of Portland in Maine to receive consignments of whisky and allow the drink to be sold in the streets, and if the authorities refuse, then to send a fleet into the great harbour and bombard the town? Or would the argument be made any the better if some of the traders in the forbidden drink were to insist that whisky is a very wholesome beverage, or at all events not nearly so unwholesome as the draughts of iced water in which the people of Maine delight to indulge? Such arguments appear absurd when thus stated;

but such were exactly the arguments which gained the support of a large proportion of the British public for the policy of the Ministry who pressed on a war with China. We may perhaps venture to believe that if such a question were once again to arise, a Prime Minister in our own days would have some difficulty in carrying the public along with him in support of such a policy. There was one of our wars with Spain which was very popular in its day, and about which Edmund Burke said long afterwards that he had conversed with all the principal authors of that war and that not one of them, in his time, had a single word to say in its justification. Much later still there came the Crimean War, about which there cannot be any doubt that the public were for the time very enthusiastic, and about which John Bright said afterwards that he had spoken to many of the English statesmen who were responsible for that war, and that not one of them had a word to say in its defence. In the same way it cannot be doubted that the Chinese War, about which we are writing, was supported by the general approval of the British public at the time, and that there is not now a statesman in England whose conscience and judgment will allow him to frame a sentence in support of the principle on which that war was carried on by England.

The war went on and, of course, the English troops had it all their own way. The Chinese often fought bravely, and in many cases fought with absolute desperation; but the whole affair was like a battle between a pack of schoolboys

and a regiment of the Guards. The Chinese at last had to make peace on any terms we chose to offer. The first condition made on behalf of England was that the island of Hong-kong should be yielded up to the British Empire as a possession for ever. The Chinese Government gave up Hong-kong—there was nothing else to be done. Then it was insisted on the part of England that five ports, since known as the Treaty Ports, should be thrown open to British trade, and that British Consuls should be established there. The ports were Canton, Amoy, Foo-chow-foo, Ningpo, and Shanghai. Of course the Chinese Government had to yield to this demand also. Then the indemnity was settled as we have already stated, and the war was over for the time. Another war with China followed only too quickly. The cause of this war was the capture of the lorcha *Arrow* on October 8, 1856, on the Canton River. Lorcha, it should be said, is a sort of Portuguese word taken from the Portuguese settlement at the mouth of the river, and means a boat built after the European model. The very name of the lorcha *Arrow* has long since been well-nigh forgotten; but at the time, and for years after, it was in the mouths of all men. What was the quarrel about? A party of Chinese in charge of an officer boarded the *Arrow* on the day mentioned, captured twelve of its men on a charge of piracy, and took them ashore for trial by the Chinese authorities. Now, the *Arrow* was at that time undoubtedly flying the British flag, and our Consul demanded the instant release of the prisoners, and



THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.
1830–

our plenipotentiary at Hong-kong insisted not only that the release should take place within forty-eight hours, but that a formal apology should be offered for their arrest, and a pledge given by the Chinese authorities that no such act should ever be committed again. If all this were not done the British plenipotentiary—Sir John Bowring—announced that naval operations should at once be undertaken. The Chinese authorities would not at first give way; the great city of Canton was bombarded by the British fleet, and a regular war begun. Now what was the case for the Chinese authorities? Simply this—that the *Arrow* was not and never had been an English vessel, that it was a pirate vessel built and manned by Chinese, and that it had no right whatever to fly the English flag. All this turned out to be true. The great lawyer Lord Lyndhurst declared, when the subject was debated in the House of Lords, that the proceedings of the British authorities could not be justified upon any principle, either of law or of reason; and the House of Commons censured the whole of the British work in Canton by a majority of two hundred and sixty-three votes against two hundred and forty-seven. Among those who condemned the action of the British authorities were Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, Lord John Russell and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, and Lord Robert Cecil, now Marquis of Salisbury.

The war with China had to be put off for the time partly because of the outbreak of the great Indian Mutiny, and when we were ready to begin it again we had France to assist us. France had

grievances of her own against China, and the Emperor Louis Napoleon was not sorry to have a chance of co-operating with us again in a foreign war. The allies compelled the Chinese Government to adopt the Treaty of Tien-tsin, which contained among other clauses a stipulation for the exchange of the Ratifications at Pekin, the capital of the great unwieldy empire. The English and French envoys found their way up the Peiho River stopped by the Chinese forts, and they ordered their combined fleet to force a passage. The Chinese artillerymen opened fire, and showed some skill and precision, doing heavy damage to the English and French. The English and the French Admirals were both seriously wounded. There is a thrilling little story to be told here. An American frigate was in the river; her captain threw overboard his strict principles of international law, declared that blood was thicker than water, and that he could not stand by and see Englishmen slaughtered by Chinese. He came to the rescue and saved many Englishmen and Frenchmen from the fire of the forts. The forcing of the river was given up for the moment; but of course the attempt was renewed and with complete success. The allies captured the forts, occupied Tien-tsin, marched to Pekin, forced their way and displayed the English and French flags side by side on the walls of the city. Some acts of treachery were undoubtedly committed by some of the Chinese during the negotiations, and twenty-six Englishmen and twelve subjects of France were captured.

Thirteen of the Englishmen died from the hard

usage they received ; the English and French plenipotentiaries compelled the release of the others, and Lord Elgin, the English plenipotentiary, to mark his sense of the treachery, ordered the great Imperial summer palace to be levelled to the ground. It was really a vast park of palaces covering an area of many miles. A monument was raised on the spot with an inscription in Chinese proclaiming that the act was done as a public punishment for treachery and cruelty. The French commissioner declined to take part in the act of Lord Elgin ; but it should be said that the French troops had already looted the palace to their hearts' content. Many in England strongly condemned the destruction of the summer palace ; but Lord Elgin did not see that there was any other course left for him to take. He could not allow the treachery to remain wholly unpunished ; and he felt sure that if he had demanded satisfaction and the surrender of the malefactors, the Chinese Government would have readily handed over to him any number of obscure Chinamen who probably had never heard of the murder of Englishmen and Frenchmen, and would have gone to their death without knowing why they were consigned to such a fate. Lord Elgin thought that on the whole his only course was to set up a lasting landmark at Pekin, which, without any more bloodshed, would be a perpetual warning to the Chinese that even in war the game must be played according to established rules. Lord Elgin probably did the best he could under all the circumstances ; one can only feel pity for an eminent man placed in so terrible a dilemma.

The Allied Powers, of course, had no difficulty in obtaining any terms they thought fit to exact. China had to agree that Pekin should be open to the representatives of England and of France; she had to hand over a large sum of money as compensation to the families of the murdered prisoners, to pay a war indemnity, and to make an apology for all that she had done or failed to do. Thus, therefore, Pekin was thrown open to our envoys, and the capital of China could preserve her vestal seclusion no longer. The Convention was signed by Lord Elgin in Pekin on October 24, 1860. The Allies quitted Pekin on November 5th, and peace was proclaimed. The West had gained its point so far, and had compelled China to open her gates to the enterprising trader from beyond the ocean. In truth, such was the whole object of all the various struggles. The enterprising trader could not think of allowing so huge an Empire as China to shut herself out from the invasion of foreign commercial enterprise. This was the whole story; this is the whole story. Western civilisation thought China too big a country to be lost to Western commercial enterprise; too good a market not to be opened at any cost of life or of principle. The disputes which are going on with China at the present moment, and in which England, France, Germany, Russia and America are engaged, have only the same question to settle. It is certain that the Chinese are very foolish in wanting to keep their vast country all to themselves, and no doubt there is room enough in it for others as well as for them. There are moralists still who believe that

trade is better fostered in the end by peaceful means than by shot and shell; but the love of conquest and the love of trade still glows fiercely in the heart of Western civilisation; and the Chinese are essentially a shrewd people, and will probably find out before long the hopelessness of endeavouring to resist the invasion of modern traffic. Thus far, at least, the wars with China do not seem to add much honour to the triumphs of Western civilisation.

IX

THE IRISH NATIONAL MOVEMENT

THE year 1843 became memorable because it saw the climax of the repeal agitation under Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell was really the man who had carried Catholic Emancipation, or, at least, had compelled English statesmen to carry it. Since its accomplishment he had turned his attention completely to an agitation which had for its object the passing of a measure for the repeal of the Acts of Parliament which brought Great Britain and Ireland into a legislative union. O'Connell's object was to restore the Irish Parliament, and to allow Irishmen to make laws for the domestic government of their own country. His desire was, in fact, to obtain for Ireland just such a local parliament as Canada and each of the great Australasian Colonies now possess. He was entirely opposed to all idea of separation from England and had no sympathy whatever with the political action of men like Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who created the rebellion of 1798. Having had much of his early education in France, where he saw some of the horrors of the

JOHN TYNDALL.
1820–1893.

Revolution, he had come back to his own country with a perfect hatred of all revolutionary methods. No human cause, he proclaimed again and again, is worth the shedding of one drop of blood. Yet, though he would have nothing to do with physical force, he was quite willing to make such demonstration of physical force as might influence an English Ministry, or frighten an English Ministry, towards the object he desired to gain. His plan of agitation was to hold great "monster meetings," as they were called, in all parts of Ireland—meetings often attended each of them by forty or fifty thousand persons. The meetings would gather together by processions from various outlying places, and there was a good deal of military show about the arranging, the marshalling, and the moving of the processions. O'Connell himself was fond of talking of his gallant armies of repealers. At every one of these meetings, which had now become a familiar object in every part of the country, speeches more or less impassioned were made by local orators, and of course, when O'Connell himself was present the speech of the day came from him. O'Connell was probably the greatest open-air speaker ever known in Great Britain or Ireland. There are three distinct styles of political speech-making; there is the open-air speech, the speech in a great hall, and the speech on the floor of the House of Commons. O'Connell was a great success in each of the three styles; but his greatest success was in the open air. His commanding presence, his incomparable voice, and his power of rapid change from rich humour to deep

pathos and overwhelming passion could always hold his audience enthralled. Some of his speeches no doubt were very violent; for it seemed to be a part of his policy to keep the passion of his countrymen always aroused, and to impress, at least indirectly, upon the Government, the power which he had to create a rebellion if ever he should think fit to exercise it. One of his greatest meetings, indeed his last great monster meeting, was to be held at Clontarf, near Dublin, on October 8, 1843. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland declared the intended meeting unlawful, and issued an order forbidding it. Every one was anxious to know what step O'Connell would take. Would he defy the Lord-Lieutenant and persist in holding a meeting, and let the troops and the people settle the matter by physical force? No doubt if O'Connell had persisted in holding the meeting it would have been the outbreak of a rebellion; and although the rebellion would have been crushed in the end, yet it could not have been crushed without immense loss of human life. O'Connell issued a proclamation of his own, in which he declared that the Lord-Lieutenant must be obeyed, that the meeting was not to be held, and that the people must return quietly to their homes. O'Connell's commands were obeyed to the letter; the vast crowds dispersed, and there was not the smallest disturbance of the peace. But the immediate result was a secession of some of O'Connell's most earnest and most able followers from his ranks; the collapse of the Repeal agitation; and the creation of a new national movement.

Under O'Connell's own training a number of clever and brilliant young men had been brought up to the task of political agitation. A new national literature, in books, in newspapers, and in poems, had grown up all over the country. Despite O'Connell's peaceful declarations, nearly all the young men firmly believed that they were in training for an armed rebellion; and that when the right moment came O'Connell would give the signal for action. To them the right moment seemed to have come when the Lord-Lieutenant for the first time issued his proclamation to forbid the holding of the meeting at Clontarf. When O'Connell decreed that the proclamation must be obeyed, the younger men felt that any further agitation of the same kind must be but an anti-climax. In the meanwhile the Government, who did not seem to understand in the least the reality of the triumph they had gained, set to work with the prosecution against O'Connell and some of his principal followers on a charge of having conspired to raise disaffection amongst Her Majesty's subjects. O'Connell himself, with his son, John O'Connell, and with Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who afterwards became a distinguished statesman in Australia, and is alive and honoured to-day, were among the leading men against whom the prosecution was directed. The whole business of the prosecution became in the end a dismal and disastrous failure for the Crown authorities. The Crown Prosecutor objected in turn to the name of every Catholic who was called to serve on the jury, and the result was that in the

capital of the country, five-sixths of whose population were Catholics, and on a question politically affecting the whole national sentiment of Ireland, not one single Catholic was allowed to serve on the jury empanelled to try the Irish national leader. O'Connell and his associates were convicted, of course, and were sentenced to a fine and to various periods of imprisonment. O'Connell went to prison and appealed to the House of Lords. The appeal was held in September, 1844. At that time the House of Lords was the High Court of Appeal on all legal questions. Now it need hardly be said that the vast majority of the members of the House of Lords were not lawyers and knew nothing about law. But the usage was, that only the law Lords as they were called, that is the Peers who were lawyers by profession, and who had been elevated to the Peerage because of their legal services, should vote in the division on a question of legal appeal if any division should take place. Five law Lords were present when O'Connell's appeal was heard—the Lord Chancellor (Lord Lyndhurst); Lord Brougham, Lord Denman, Lord Cottenham, and Lord Campbell. Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Brougham were of opinion that the sentence of the Criminal Court should be affirmed. Lord Denman, a lawyer of the highest ability and reputation, on the other hand condemned altogether the manner in which the trial had been conducted, and especially condemned the systematic exclusion of all Catholics from the jury box. Some of his words have become proverbial, have passed into the common speech of men, and are quoted every day by people who have not the

least idea from what authority they are quoting. Lord Denman said that such practices as that of the Crown Prosecutor at the O'Connell trial would make of law "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." Lord Cottenham and Lord Campbell agreed with Lord Denman. But then, if the lay Peers as they were called—that is the Peers who were not lawyers—were to vote on the question, as by law they had a perfect right to do, it was absolutely certain that the vast majority of votes would have been given against O'Connell. O'Connell had always bitterly denounced the House of Lords, its constitution, its influence, and even its leading members. The effect upon public opinion in Ireland would have been calamitous if the practice pursued on the O'Connell trial had been sanctioned merely by the ignorant votes of Peers who were well known to be bitter opponents of O'Connell and his agitation. A wise and timely word from a distinguished Peer, Lord Wharncliffe, saved the situation. Lord Wharncliffe appealed to the lay Peers not to create a public scandal by departing from their usual course, and recording their votes on a question which affected a purely legal issue, while it concerned also the leader of a political movement, to which the great majority of the lay Peers were well known to be opposed. This advice had its effect; the lay Peers withdrew and left the question to be settled according to the invariable course on former occasions by the decision of the law Lords. As we have seen, three out of five of the law Lords were in favour of the appeal; and the appeal was therefore successful, and O'Connell and his companions were set at liberty.

Of course, this result was welcomed with impassioned enthusiasm by the Nationalists of Ireland; but the Repeal agitation never recovered its hold upon the country.

O'Connell's health soon gave way, and he was no longer able to exert the influence he once had maintained over the people of Ireland. As he grew weaker the younger men grew stronger, and they carried on their own agitation, which after awhile ceased even to profess to hold itself bound by the limits of the existing constitution. A famine broke out in Ireland, and public attention for a time was drawn away from any manner of agitation, constitutional or otherwise. O'Connell's last speech in the House of Commons was made on the subject of the growing famine, on April 3, 1846. Then his health utterly collapsed and broke down. He had led a life of unceasing work and toil and excitement, and even his colossal frame could not bear the task he had imposed upon it. He was longing to die in Rome, the capital of his Church, and he hurried to Italy with that last hope. The hope failed him, and he could only drag his languishing limbs to Genoa, where he died on May 15, 1847. He lived just long enough to escape the sight of another great continental revolution, and of its sudden effects upon his own country, and upon the great movement which he had called into existence with such unsparing energy and such popular power.

The famine proved most desolating in its effect; the potato crop failed almost altogether during two or three successive seasons; and the Irish peasantry

of the South, the West, and the Midlands lived almost entirely on the potato. With the famine began that immense rush of emigration to the United States which, combined with the vast number of deaths caused by starvation and by sickness, soon reduced the population of Ireland to half what its number had been in the days of the struggle for Catholic Emancipation. In 1848 came the Revolution in France, the sudden dethronement of Louis Philippe and the establishment of a new Republic. The flame of revolution once more spread over all Europe, and thrones were shaken from the Bay of Biscay to the Dardenelles. The excitement caught the Young Ireland Party, as the former followers of O'Connell were called who had seceded from his leadership during his later years. The result was the delivery of inflammatory speeches, the writing of inflammatory poems and leading articles, and finally, a sudden, hardly premeditated outbreak of rebellion in the summer of 1848. The rebellion was put down before it had time to catch fire, and would have been a hopeless business in any case, for no provision of arms and ammunition had been made, and the wisest among the young men who led the party saw the futility of any attempt at physical force, and opposed it as long as they could. The leader of the Young Ireland Party, Mr. William Smith O'Brien, his friend Thomas Francis Meagher, and two others were put on trial charged with high treason, convicted and sentenced to execution. The sentence, however, was not carried out; it would have been impossible at that time to hurry men to the scaffold for an attempt which

collapsed almost altogether without bloodshed; and Smith O'Brien and his companions were sent to penal servitude for life. All the Young Ireland leaders were men of high character and high ability. John Blake Dillon, who escaped to France and then to America, had a distinguished career at the American Bar, and was afterwards allowed to return to this country, where he sat in Parliament for some years and was esteemed by every one. His son, John Dillon, is now a distinguished Irish Nationalist Member of Parliament. D'Arcy McGee, another Young Irelander, rose to hold high office in the Ministry of the Canadian Parliament. Meagher and Richard O'Gorman made honourable careers in the Great American Republic. Of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy we have already spoken.

The Young Ireland movement was over; but it left a new national inspiration behind it, which in our time, has taken the constitutional and parliamentary method of an agitation for Home Rule. Great English statesmen and orators like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright were led to take on themselves the task of remedying some of the cruel grievances which law and custom had long inflicted on Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, with the assistance of Mr. Bright, abolished the unjust, anomalous, and altogether peculiar laws which made the Irish farmer and the Irish labourer the mere bondslaves of the landlord class; and disestablished and disendowed the Irish State Church, an institution up to that time maintained by the State, but which did not appeal to the religious sympathies of one-sixth of the Irish people. More lately Mr. Gladstone did his best to obtain for Ireland a domestic Parliament,

and only failed in his generous effort in his first attempt because of the secession from the Liberal Party, which, as we have already shown, invariably follows any attempt to establish some great measure of popular reform, and in his second attempt because of the resistance of the House of Lords. We are now anticipating some passages of our story which are to be set out more fully in a future chapter. The demand and the agitation for Home Rule still go on. Without attempting to forecast the future, we may say that the demand is nothing more than for the extension to Ireland of the constitutional system which has pacified and consolidated Canada, which has been the strength of the Australasian colonies, which exists in the Cape of Good Hope, and exists even in the Channel Islands. These, at least, may be taken as illustrations of the system of Home Rule, and, probably, as guiding lights helping us to foresee what are the chances for a contented, a prosperous, and a loyal Ireland in the coming time.

X

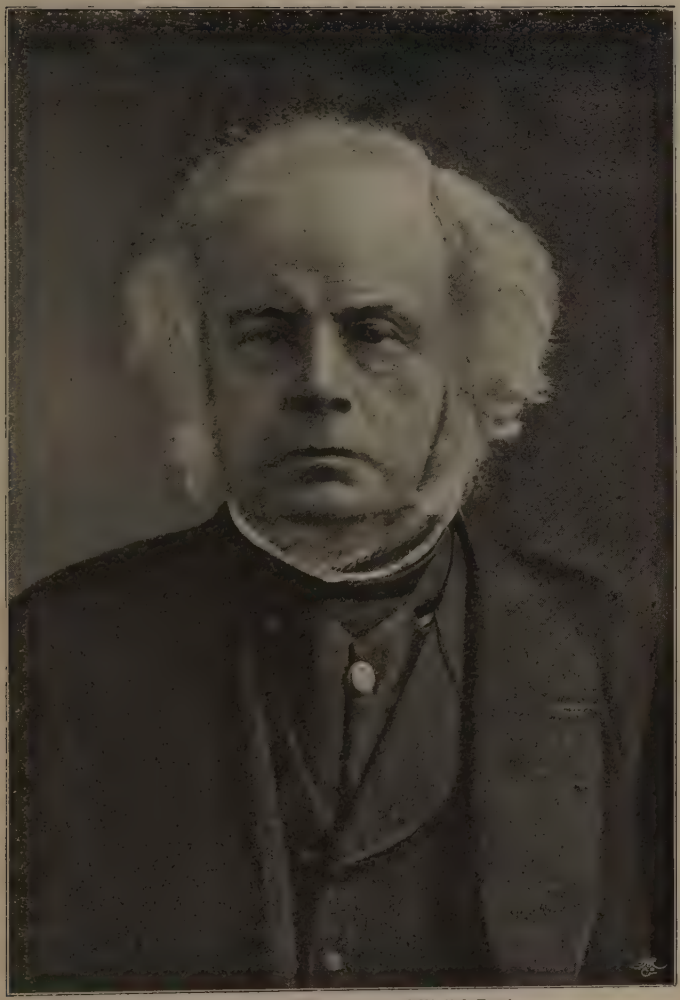
PEEL'S TRIUMPH AND FALL

ONE of the most important measures of Peel's financial administration was the passing of the Bank Charter Act in 1844. The object of the Bank Charter Act was to separate the issue from the banking department of the Bank of England, to restrict the issue of notes, to a certain specified amount of securities, to place the whole further circulation on what is termed a gold basis, and to prevent the formation of any new banks having the power to issue notes. The object of this important legislation was to make it sure that no notes should be issued which did not represent an actual amount of gold in the possession or at the disposal of the Bank. This very salutary piece of legislation had, however, to be suspended on two subsequent occasions, because in each instance of a certain crisis in the financial world which could not have been dealt with under a strict application of the existing law. In the autumn of 1857 it was first suspended, and nearly nine years later, on the famous "Black Friday," May 11, 1866, a day of financial panic and peril only too well remembered still. We have anticipated a little

the course of history in order to mention these two suspensions of the Bank Charter Act, and will now return to the story of Peel's administration.

The year 1846 will always be memorable in the story of modern England because of the introduction of Sir Robert Peel's Free Trade policy. Peel had taken office in 1841 as an opponent to Free Trade, and in 1846, still Prime Minister, he proposed and carried the measure for the abolition of the duties on the importation of foreign grain. It would be almost needless to say that he was bitterly denounced by his opponents for what they held to be his outrageous political inconsistency. No doubt he was inconsistent, if it be inconsistency to learn anything of experience and of the lessons which are taught by unexpected events. Peel was inconsistent with regard to Free Trade as he had been inconsistent with regard to Catholic Emancipation. At one time he did not see his way to concede Catholic Emancipation; later on, as we have already shown, he felt himself compelled, by the teaching of events, to become its advocate. So it was with regard to Free Trade. In the case of Catholic Emancipation he saw himself compelled to choose between the relief of the Catholics and a civil war. In the case of Free Trade he saw himself compelled to choose between the removal of the duty on foreign grain and the outbreak of famine after famine. An agitation had long been growing up in England, having its birthplace in Lancashire, for the removal of all duties which limited the necessary supply of food to the people of Great Britain and Ireland. The grain

grown in England, no matter how plenteous, was always made costly to the people by the heavy prices which the landlords exacted, and the duties on the importation of foreign grain were kept high with the avowed purpose of protecting the landlord against the competition of foreign growers. The Manchester Free Trade League was founded for the purpose of creating an agitation which should arouse the country generally to insist on the abolition of that duty, and let the people have bread that they might eat of it and live, no matter whether the bread was made from grain cultivated at home or cultivated abroad. The chief leaders of the Free Trade League were Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Charles Villiers. Mr. Cobden was one of the most persuasive and convincing speakers who ever addressed the House of Commons or any English meeting. He always appealed to the reason and never to the passions. John Bright was a man equally unselfish and exalted in character, but possessed of a higher order of eloquence; he was, indeed, in the House of Commons and out of it one of the greatest orators England has ever known. Charles Villiers was, unlike Cobden and Bright, a man of aristocratic birth and training, and was led to become a Free Trader by intellectual conviction and by his sympathy with the cause of the poor. Villiers was in Parliament many years before Cobden and Bright obtained seats there, and used to bring forward year after year a motion calling for the abolition of the duty on the importation of foreign grain. Cobden and Bright went about the country addressing meetings everywhere, and



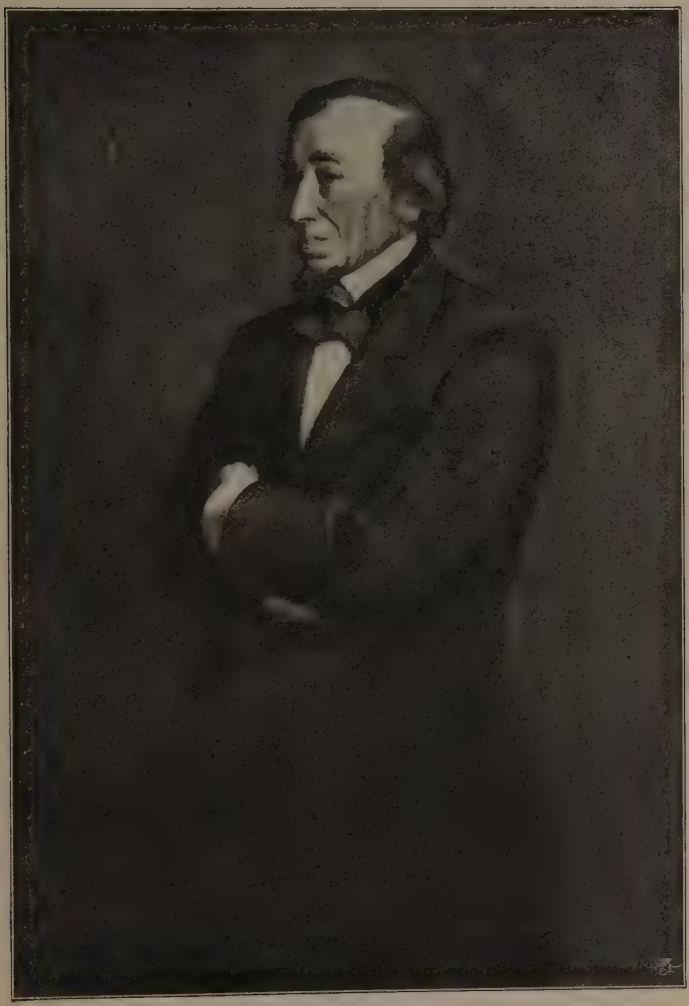
(From a photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.)

JOHN BRIGHT.
1811–1889.

devoting themselves almost altogether to the one single subject. The Free Trade Hall, Manchester was built on the ground where, as we have told our readers already, took place what was called the massacre of Peterloo.

The agitation which Bright and Cobden founded and carried on, soon became an immense power all over England. It was aided before long by a grim and terrible ally. "Famine itself," as Mr. Bright put it in his eloquent words, "against which we had warred came to our aid." The Irish famine broke out, and it was necessary to take some instant steps lest the people of Ireland should wholly perish. Lord John Russell had for some time been a growing convert to the economic principle of Free Trade, and would have become a convinced Free Trader in any case, but the Irish famine hastened his convictions. So it was, too, with Sir Robert Peel; and before the end of 1845 Peel had made up his mind that nothing short of a total abolition, within a very limited space of time, of the import duty on foreign grain would satisfy the demands of the emergency and of the country, and ward off the recurrence of periodical famine. In 1846 Peel announced his intention to bring in a measure which should, after a short and limited delay, abolish the Corn Laws for ever. Some of his colleagues, however, Lord Stanley in particular, broke away from Peel on this question. Peel found that he could not go on under such conditions, and he resigned his office; and the Queen sent for Lord John Russell and invited him to form an administration. Russell did his best to comply

with the Queen's wish, but he found that the Whig Party were not strong enough for the work, that they had not a majority in the House of Commons, and that there were irreconcilable differences on other questions amongst some of those whom he proposed to invite to his Cabinet. The enterprise, therefore, failed, and there was nothing for it but to send for Peel again, and urge him to form the best administration he could, and carry on his work. Peel consented, and formed an administration. One incidental fact of some historical interest deserves to be mentioned here. Mr. Gladstone accepted office under Peel; but he could not sit in Parliament without a re-election, and the borough of Newark which he represented was wholly under the influence of the Duke of Newcastle, who had declared against the policy of Sir Robert Peel. Gladstone, therefore, did not seek re-election, and remained without a seat in the House of Commons during the momentous months which were devoted to the carrying of the Free Trade policy. It is not necessary to go into all the details of the different stages by which Peel's policy was carried into law. The third reading of the Bill passed the House of Commons on the 15th of May, 1846, by a majority of ninety-eight votes. It was sent up to the House of Lords, and there, by the earnest advice of the Duke of Wellington, was carried through without serious or prolonged opposition. The Duke of Wellington probably knew little or nothing about the economic question involved, but he acted upon his old principle—he believed that Peel knew all about the matter; he had absolute



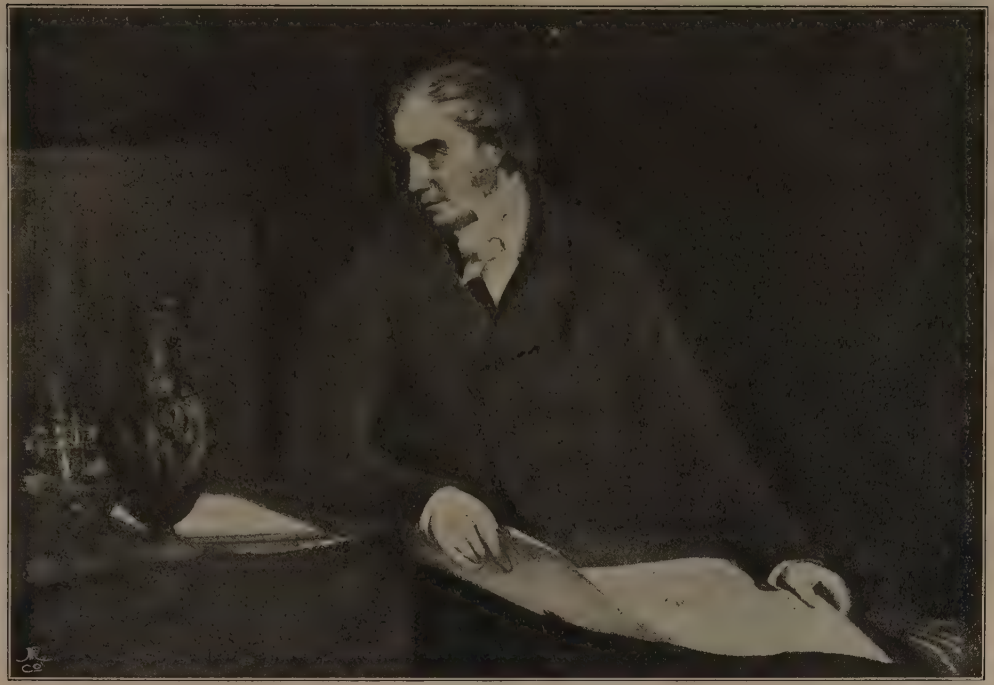
BENJAMIN DISRAELI.
1804–1881.

confidence in Peel, and therefore he supported Peel with all his might. The Bill passed through the House of Lords on the 25th of June, 1846.

During the debates in the House of Commons an entirely new power had come into English political life in the person of Mr. Disraeli. Disraeli had been ten years in Parliament; he had got into the House of Commons when still a very young man, and even then after repeated unsuccessful attempts. He was known as a literary man, as a novelist of what was considered a somewhat eccentric promise, for it took the public some time to understand the genuine originality and power that belonged to such books as "Vivian Grey" and "Coningsby." He came into the House of Commons as a sort of Radical under the support of Daniel O'Connell and Joseph Hume. He probably had no very strong political opinions of any kind; but it seemed perhaps to him the natural thing that a young man of genius should begin as a Radical. His first speech in the House of Commons was a complete and even a grotesque failure. He was in no wise appalled, however; he kept on making speech after speech every session, and for fully ten years he gave no promise of success. Meantime his political opinions had been undergoing gradual change. His unfriendly critics always maintained to the end of his life that he had been a good deal influenced by the conditions of the rival parties. There can be no doubt that through all his failures Disraeli remained convinced, and rightly convinced, of his own great parliamentary capacity. Nearly all the rising talent was on the Liberal side of the

House. On the Tory side, indeed, were men like Peel himself and such men as Sir James Graham, Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, and others; but after Peel the men then regarded as strongest were on the other side, and Peel had again and again been giving signs that his intellectual convictions were drawing him nearer and nearer on many great questions to the opinions of the most enlightened Liberals. Disraeli therefore, his hostile critics say, saw that there was a better chance for him on the Tory side than on the Liberal side. When Peel brought in his Free Trade measure there was a complete break-up of the Tory Party, and a third party, composed of men who called themselves the Peelites, including Graham, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert, was speedily formed. Disraeli found his opportunity in the debates on Peel's Free Trade measure, and he distinguished himself in a manner which at once won for him a commanding place in the House of Commons. That place he maintained to the last, up to the day when, thirty years later, he left the House of Commons for ever, and passed into the House of Lords. So strange an instance of failure after failure, followed by the grasping of one sudden opportunity, and then converted into a success which lasted unbroken for the rest of a lifetime, is not to be recorded of any other man in the parliamentary history of England.

Peel had carried his great measure, but his own fall from power followed his triumph almost in a moment. He had believed himself compelled to introduce a Coercion measure for Ireland, because of some disturbances there; and he was supported in the



LORD ABERDEEN.
1784–1860.

first instance of Lord George Bentinck, who afterwards became, at least in name, the leader of the Tory Party in the House of Commons. But in the interval the Free Trade Bill had passed, and the proposal for the second reading of the Coercion measure gave Bentinck, Disraeli, and the Tories generally a chance of revenge. They eagerly availed themselves of the chance. The followers of O'Connell would certainly vote against the Bill, most of the English Radical members might be expected to vote against it, and if the Tories joined with both the fate of the Bill would be sealed. The Tories were not likely to resist the temptation, which chance thus offered them, to revenge themselves on Peel for what they considered his betrayal of their cause. On Thursday, June 25, 1846, the House of Commons divided on the second reading of the Coercion Bill. Lord George Bentinck led some eighty of his Protectionists into the lobby against the motion for the second reading, and their votes decided the fate of the measure and of the Ministry. Two hundred and nineteen votes were given for the Bill, and two hundred and ninety-two against it, leaving the Ministry in a minority of seventy-three. In the very hour of his greatest success, Sir Robert Peel fell from power once for all. On the fourth day afterwards the great Minister announced his resignation of office. The speech in which he made the announcement was remarkable for its dignity, its magnanimity, and its manly, generous feeling. Its closing passage may well be quoted.

"It may be," said Peel, "that I shall leave a name

sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in those places which are the abode of men whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow—a name remembered with expressions of goodwill, when they shall recreate their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice." These closing lines became Peel's best epitaph; his official career was over. He took part in one or two great debates afterwards, especially in that which was known as the Don Pacifico question. That debate took place in the later days of June, 1850. On the 29th of June, when riding near Buckingham Palace in London he was thrown from his horse, and received such injuries that his death followed on the 2nd of July. He was not so far advanced in age at the time of the accident that he might not still have expected some years of an honourable and successful career, but for the sudden and fatal chance which laid him low. His name will always be remembered with honour in the history of England. His country, during his career of statesmanship, was never tried by any crisis so great as that which has taxed the genius and resources of other English Ministers; and the world cannot tell whether, if he had been so tried, he might not have developed the very highest genius of statesmanship. What we do know is that to every difficulty which faced him in his reforming career he proved himself superior, and we know, too, that every official act of his was inspired and guided by conscience as well as by intellect. In a century

CARDINAL NEWMAN.
1801–1890.

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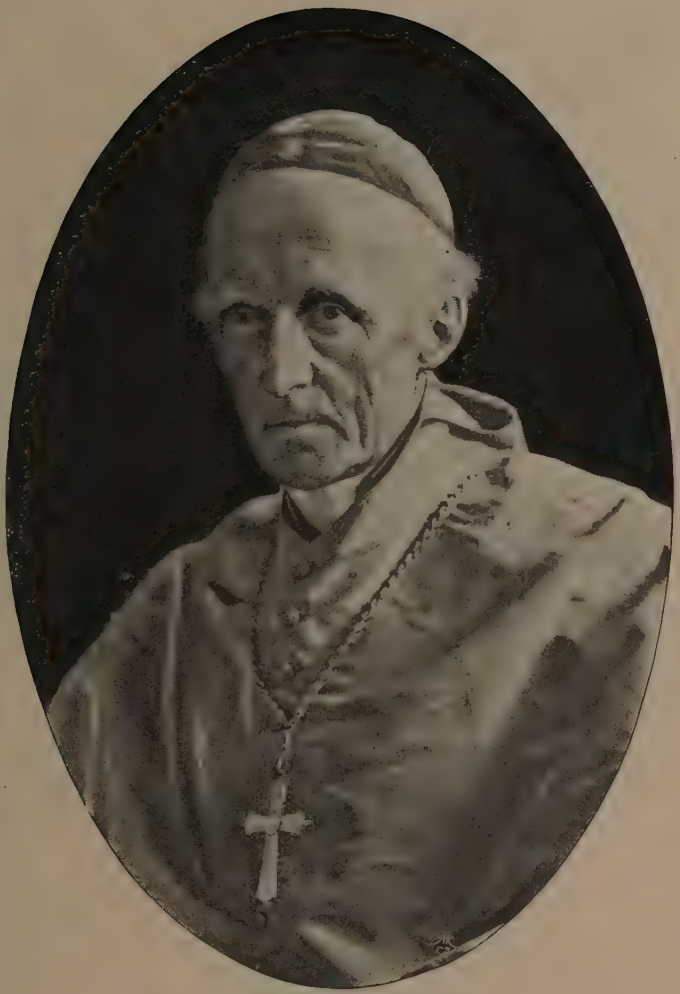
which produced many great Englishmen, Robert Peel was one of the greatest.

May 1, 1851, was in a certain sense an epoch-making day. It saw the opening of the Crystal Palace erected in Hyde Park by Sir Joseph Paxton —the first of a series of International Exhibitions which have since been established at different times in all the great capitals of the world. Vast hopes were entertained as to the future which the principle of the International Exhibition was to inaugurate for all the nations of the earth. Enthusiastic poets and orators and preachers persuaded themselves, and tried to persuade their hearers, that a new law of international peace and universal brotherhood was to be set up for the blessing of mankind. The International Exhibition did much practical good, although it certainly did not open an era of international peace and universal brotherhood. The Crystal Palace Exhibition, and the many other exhibitions of the same kind which followed it, accomplished much in the promotion of industrial science and art, and in fostering a generous rivalry among all civilised nations in the production of the works that belong to peace. On the whole it is not too much to say that the world was in many ways the better for the experiments introduced by the exhibition in the Crystal Palace, but the spirit of war breathed upon the nations just the same as before, and the beneficent results of the great industrial enterprise proved themselves to belong only to the world of wholesome prose, and not to that of exalted poetry.

A few lines ought to be given to the fierce dispute

which raged in Parliament and outside it, over the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. The Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell in the year 1851 to prevent Roman Catholic prelates in England from accepting titles bearing the names of the districts in which their spiritual ministrations took place. Up to that time the English Catholic archbishops and bishops had taken titles derived from foreign places. For instance Cardinal Wiseman had been appointed by the Pope in 1840 one of the Vicars-Apostolic in England, and held his position here as Bishop of Melipotamus, "In Partibus Infidelium"; now by a new decree of the Pope he became Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster. The reader has in that fact the whole point of the controversy. Lord John Russell's Bill proposed to inflict a penalty on the assumption of such titles by the Roman Catholic prelates in England, and to make null and void any bequests made in virtue of those titles. It was found to be impossible to apply such legislation to Ireland, where the Roman Catholic prelates had always been called by local titles—by any title, in fact, which their Church thought fit to give them. More than one Ministerial crisis took place. The measure was strongly opposed by such men as Sir James Graham, Gladstone, Cobden, and Bright, and treated by them as a mere question of religious toleration. Disraeli did not oppose the introduction of the Bill, but he spoke of it in tones of reprobation and contempt as strong as any that Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright had used. The Bill passed the House of Commons, after an impassioned protest from Mr.



CARDINAL MANNING.
1808–1892.

Gladstone in the name of religious liberty. It was carried through the House of Lords, and received the Royal assent; it became formally the law of the land, and that was an end of it. No attempt was ever made to put it into force, and the Roman Catholic prelates went on using their local titles without opposition or objection. In truth the whole controversy came out of a sort of misunderstanding which might have been avoided with a little better management on both sides. The English people fancied that a deliberate act of aggression was made against them by the Pope, and the authorities at Rome believed that a mere spirit of religious bigotry animated Lord John Russell's legislation. The Act was quietly repealed twenty years after, when most persons had forgotten its very existence.

On September 14, 1852, the great Duke of Wellington died. Since Marlborough's time no soldier had fought so well the great battles of England. We have described his character and his career already in these pages, and his epitaph is written in the history of Europe.

XI

CRIMEA AND CAWNPORE

THE Crimean War seemed at the time an event of gigantic magnitude, and even still it stands out like a great chapter in the history of modern Europe. It was, however, only an incident, and an incident of comparatively little consequence, in the story of what is called the Eastern Question. The Eastern Question is simply the question what is to be done with the Ottoman Power in Europe. The Turks, ever since they settled in the south-east of the European Continent, have shown neither capacity nor inclination for any work which tends to the advancement of civilisation. Just before the outbreak of the Crimean War the late Cardinal Newman declared in a memorable sentence that the Turk had as much right to the territory he held in Europe as the pirate had to the sea which he ravaged. At the moment, however, when the course of lectures was delivered, in one of which that sentence occurred, public opinion in England had suddenly come round to the side of Turkey, not because England loved Turkey the more, but because she loved Russia the

less. The difficulty of the question what to do with Turkey in Europe had become increased and embarrassed by the surprising growth of Russia as a military and an aggressive power. Russia had made advances in territory, and in military and in naval strength, and indeed in all the outward show of civilisation since the days of Peter the Great, such as no other European Power had ever equalled in the same space of time. Russia has shown for many years a strong inclination to settle the Eastern Question for herself and in her own way. The dream of many Russian sovereigns and statesmen since the days of Peter the Great had undoubtedly been to stretch the Russian Empire southward, to enclose the Black Sea and to make Constantinople a great Russian port. But Russian statesmanship had not been very crafty in its work, and it had excited the alarm of some great European Powers, especially of England and of France. England had for a long time regarded with alarm the successive steps in advance made by Russia along those regions of North-western Asia which lay between civilisation and England's Indian dominion. It was but natural that English statesmen should regard with alarm and with jealousy Russia's sudden expansion here, there, and everywhere; and some indiscreet words of the Emperor Nicholas to an English Ambassador seemed to give new and sudden cause for distrust. The Emperor of the French probably did not feel very secure on the throne which he had set up for himself in France, and was anxious no doubt to keep the minds of his people from brooding too much

over a despotic rule at home by dazzling them with a brilliant display of what French arms could accomplish abroad. The whole ambition of the Emperor Napoleon's life was to restore the glories of the great Napoleonic time. He was a man of shrewdness and cleverness, with imagination enough to devise great schemes of ambition, but without intellect enough to distinguish always between dream and reality. Indeed, he was above all things a dreamer. He had had many and varied experiences ; he had been an exile in London, in New York, and in other cities ; he had suffered imprisonment ; he had become a centre of plot and stratagem ; he had, when he chose to employ it, that marvellous gift of silence which passes so often for a gift of thought and of genius. According to the words of his cousin, the brilliant Prince Napoleon whose brilliancy and sound judgment brought him to nothing in the end, the Emperor Napoleon III. had twice taken Europe in ; first when he made her believe him to be a dullard, and next when he made her believe him to be a statesman. About the time at which this story of England has now arrived the Emperor Napoleon was particularly anxious for a military alliance with England. He had a family detestation of Russia, and he dreaded her growing aggressive power. He was really the inspiring agent of the war against Russia. A grievance was easily found, for undoubtedly the influence of Russia in Turkey was of a domineering kind, and it was easy to make it out that if Russia were allowed to go on much longer having things her own way, English and

French influence would be shaken out of Turkey altogether. The question was, Who is to be master in Turkey—England alone, or England and France together, or Russia alone? No one thought for a moment that the Turkish Government could possibly be a master in its own house. The Turks had long shown their incapacity for any manner of improvement in trade and commerce, in art and science, in education, in anything but the training of stout bodies of fighting men. Undoubtedly the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Porte were in many instances cruelly and barbarously treated, and the sins of the Turkish Government in this way had long been crying to Heaven. But we may as well come frankly to the point now and admit that the Crimean War was not undertaken either by England or by France out of any merely philanthropic passion for the relief of the Christian subjects of Turkey. England went into the war because her statesmen believed that Russia was growing too strong and too aggressive, and ought to be checked; France went into the war because Louis Napoleon wanted a grand military enterprise. A grievance and a reason for war were soon found and an alliance was made between France and England. Austria and Prussia held aloof, but Sardinia joined the alliance under the inspiration of Count Cavour, the great Italian statesman, who cared nothing either way about Turkey or about Russia, but who saw his chance of getting a voice in European councils by joining with such allies as England and France, and who proved his judgment and his foresight in

the end. England and France made nothing by the war, but out of it Cavour made the Kingdom of Italy.

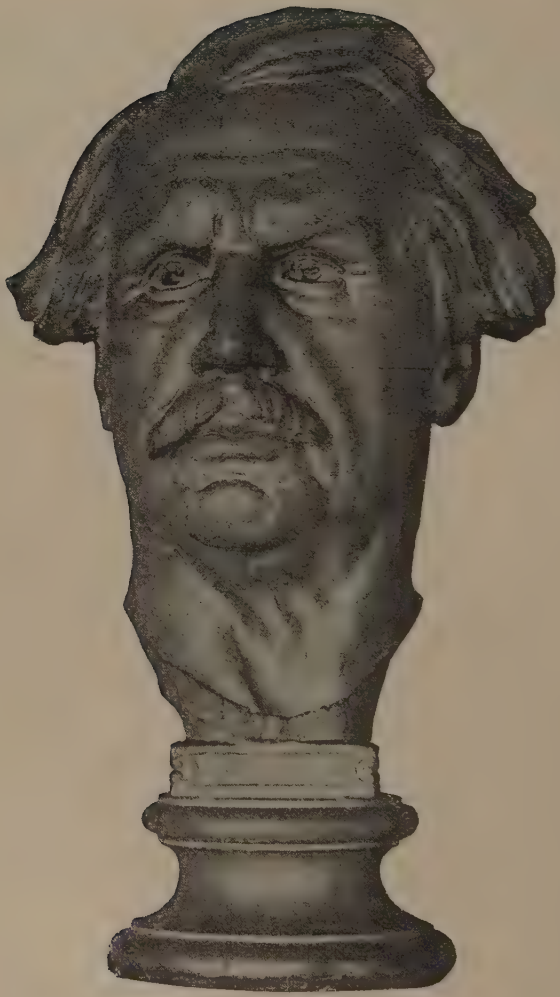
The war broke out; the Allies invaded the Crimea; they met the Russian armies on three great battle-fields—Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman—and on the field they always carried off the victory. The Allies besieged Sebastopol and captured it in the end. Russia had to come to terms, and to accept the conditions of peace imposed upon her at the Congress of Paris—conditions which under all the circumstances could hardly be called exacting or even unreasonable. All the troops fought well. About the English and the French there is no need to say anything; they fought as they have ever done. Our Turkish allies showed themselves as embattled Turks always do—capital fighters; and the Sardinian soldiers behaved brilliantly. The Russians fought with the obstinacy and determination which their countrymen had shown when they resisted the great Napoleon. It is a fact worth mentioning that the one name which came out of the whole war most illustrious was that of the Russian General Todleben, who organised the defence of Sebastopol. The English suffered immense slaughter in the campaign, but not nearly so much from the hands of the enemy as from the hands of mismanagement at home. Our commissariat system, transport system, hospital system, all broke down. Some of the most splendid men who ever faced an enemy in the field died of cold, of sickness, even of starvation, owing to the defects of management. England in fact never had braver

soldiers or better officers; but the mainsprings of the machinery at home got broken somehow, and England's worst enemy proved to be not Russia but routine. Since that time we have had the Eastern Question breaking out again and again, and the settlement has yet to be found. The alarm about Russia and the Black Sea and Constantinople and the Dardanelles has passed away. Even about our Indian frontier our alarmists at present do not seem to trouble themselves nearly as much as it once was their wont to do. Russia is going on in her old way, developing her trade, pushing her empire, and maintaining her army, although her sovereigns of late years have not shown the passion for extended territory which animated some of the earlier descendants of Peter the Great. In the meantime Russia remains a solid and a stolid despotism. The Second Empire is gone—Louis Napoleon died an exile in England, his only son perished in an obscure encounter with a savage race in South Africa, where with a love for a military career he had taken service on the side of England. The maltreatment by Turkey of her Christian subjects took form at last in such outrageous massacre that scandalised Europe was compelled to interpose its authority, and Bulgaria was made an independent kingdom, as Roumania had been made after the Crimean War. The Turkish Government, however, still keeps up its policy of massacre, and the European Governments have only lately succeeded in compelling Turkey to let her Armenian populations alone, and to resign her control over the Greek island of Crete, which

was left out of the European reckoning at the time of the battle of Navarino.

The Congress of Paris had hardly done its work in the temporary, and only temporary, settlement of the Eastern Question, when new and terrible troubles broke out in England's Indian Empire. England had always had to pay the ransom for her Indian Empire in the perpetual recurrence of trouble caused either by a mistaken policy or by the unquenchable hostility of native Indian rulers, or by the threatenings of foreign aggression. The early fame of the Duke of Wellington was won in the great Mahratta wars, when he saved for England her Indian Empire —through many a wild Mahratta battle like that in which the evil-starred father of the hero in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" lost his life. Napoleon called Wellington in contempt a Sepoy colonel; but the Sepoy colonel proved too much for Napoleon on the field of Waterloo. Early in the reign of Queen Victoria came the grim disasters of Cabul and the Khyber Pass. There, no doubt, the disasters were brought on by the ill-advised policy which English statesmanship pursued in regard to Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the great north-western region of Asia, through which all the great ways pass that lead from Persia to the Indian frontier. It was the unhappy policy of English statesmen at the time to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, partly because of the not unnatural dread which they entertained that Russia might endeavour to win over the Afghan ruler and the Afghan people into a friendship and an alliance which would open an easy path

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE.
1806–1857.



LORD LAWRENCE.
1811–1879.

for Russian ambition towards the coveted Indian territory. The ruler of Afghanistan at the time was Dost Mohammed, a man of remarkable gifts both as soldier and ruler. Dost Mohammed, however, had come to the rulership by means of a revolution which had set aside what we may call, to borrow a word from European history, the legitimate rulers of the country. He was, however, the favourite of the majority in Afghanistan ; but his reign was regarded with alarm and jealousy by English statesmen, who looked on him as likely to become the instrument of Russia's designs. Therefore, England endeavoured to put him aside, and to set up a new ruler in his place. Out of that ill-omened policy came all the disasters that happened. Our Envoy, Sir Alexander Burnes, was ordered to carry out a policy of which he thoroughly disapproved. He was a friend of the Afghans, but he had to obey his orders ; and he was treacherously murdered in Cabul. An army was sent from India to set up the puppet King and to avenge the murder of Burnes ; and the army found the whole native population against them, and had to attempt a retreat through the Khyber Pass. Men and women are still living who can well remember the impression created in England by the accounts which reached London—news travelled slowly in those days—of the cruel sufferings and slaughter which our officers and soldiers, and many English ladies and children, experienced in that ghastly retreat. It is no part of our object to go through the details of that dreadful time ; let it be enough to say that scarcely a handful of that army reached the

Indian frontier. There was treachery on the part of some of the followers of Dost Mohammed; on the part of his son, Akbar Khan, among the rest; and the Afghans tried to excuse their treachery by declaring that England had behaved with treachery to them. The puppet King was himself assassinated; and the whole story is one of massacre and of suffering—all the more melancholy to read of, because the English officers and troops did their duty splendidly, and the English women showed bravery and endurance worthy of the bravest and most patient men.

Now again, in 1857, a new and far more widespread evil threatened the safety of the Indian Empire. There can be no doubt that for a long time a vast conspiracy against England had been spreading itself over India. English Viceroys and English statesmen at home had believed themselves, again and again, compelled by events to dethrone native princes, and to take possession of their dominions. Probably all that is but an inevitable part of the work of conquest, when conquest is once undertaken in a country of vast extent like India, and peopled, like India, by a variety of native races differing among themselves in language, in traditions, in religion, in usages, and in aspirations. England had lately been annexing new territories in India and dispossessing native rulers. The time, no doubt, seemed peculiarly appropriate for a general uprising on the part of the native populations against the English masters of the soil. England was actually engaged at the time in a war with Persia, and a large

number of her troops were withdrawn from India to carry on that war. Then there can be no doubt that the events of the Crimean War had made a deep impression on the minds of some of the Indian rulers and of the Indian populations. An impression had gone abroad in India that England had not shown to great advantage in the Crimean War; that even with the help of France she had had enough to do to hold up against Russia; and that Russia, although technically defeated in the Crimea, was the great rising Power in the West. These facts combined would, at all events, give an appearance of probability to the theory that a great uprising against England was planned by the native populations, and was communicated by means of symbolical messages sent with astonishing rapidity, from village to village, all over the country. It has never been made quite certain whether the true history of the events that followed was brought about by such a widespread conspiracy, or whether the whole troubles only sprang from the discontent that existed among our native troops. At this time the native soldiers of the three presidencies, the three great divisions of the Indian Empire—Bengal, Bombay, and Madras—were nearly three hundred thousand in number, while the European soldiers were but forty-three thousand, of whom fully four thousand had been taken away for service in the Persian War. However that may be, it is certain that the rising at first took the form of a military outbreak. We call it, in common phraseology, the Indian Mutiny to this very day. The Sepoys complained, and were led to believe, that in

certain of our military edicts we had disregarded some of the strictest principles of their religion, alike of the Mussulmans and of the Hindoos. The mutiny took shape, regiment after regiment arose in revolt; and soon the whole country was aflame with war. The revolt was of course suppressed, or to put it more properly, India was reconquered. The work, however, was not done without the outpour of very seas of blood. Some of the native rulers who joined the revolt were guilty of horrible acts of treachery and cruelty, and these acts of treachery and cruelty became so much multiplied and magnified by rumour that they aroused a thorough passion for revenge, even in the minds of brave and steady-going Englishmen. The passion, indeed, spread itself over England, and for a time we heard nothing but the wildest talk of the punishment that would have to be inflicted on the native populations, before conquering England could consent to sheathe her sword. Happily for India and for England the Viceroy of the Indian Empire was a man of the loftiest principles, the highest feelings of humanity, and the most unconquerable resolve. He was Lord Canning, the illustrious son of an illustrious father, son of that George Canning whose career has already been described in these pages. Here and in India he was popularly nicknamed "Clemency Canning," a title then given in derision, but which is now maintained to his honour. Owing to Lord Canning's policy the clamour for revenge was not allowed to have all its own way. We must make some allowance for the temper of the English soldiers and the English people: the terrible story of

the massacre of English men, women, children at Cawnpore was enough, without any exaggeration, to madden the hearts and overwhelm the moral feelings of most men who belonged to the conquering race. The story of Cawnpore has been told by Sir George Trevelyan in a brilliant volume, which is an important chapter in the annals of our Indian Empire. It is only just to say that, terrible and grim as is the tale of the Cawnpore massacre, the stories of the indignities inflicted upon English women proved to be for the most part exaggerated. The English women in Cawnpore and other places suffered death indeed, but death only. Of course the result of the whole struggle was what every cool-headed Englishman and every capable observer must have anticipated—English arms completely suppressed the insurrection. More splendid services were never rendered to English Empire in India than those which were rendered by our soldiers and statesmen through that long struggle.

The names of Henry Havelock, of the two Lawrences, John and Henry, and of many others will ornament the bead-roll of English fame to the end of time. One effect of the outbreak and of its repression, was found in the legislation of Parliament which abolished for ever the rule of the famous East India Company, and decreed that henceforward the Sovereign, the Government, and the Parliament, must rule India without the interposition of any trading company, however vast in its organisation and splendid in its history. It is enough to say here that the chequered fortunes of India and of the Indian popu-

lations have brightened ever since England took on herself the direct responsibility of managing her Indian Empire, and answering for it to the representatives of her people. The records of this chapter are not all of war.

On January 25, 1858, Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of the Queen, was married to the Prince Frederick William of Prussia, eldest son of William, who was then Crown Prince of Prussia, who afterwards became King William I., and later still German Emperor. Frederick William, the husband of our Princess, was a young man of the most brilliant talents and exalted character; he served with great distinction in the war against Denmark, held a high command in the war between Prussia and Austria, and also in the Franco-Prussian war which ended in the creation of the German Empire. His noble career was cut short by death on June 15, 1888, after little more than three months' reign as German Emperor.

(From a photograph by Messrs. Russell & Son.)

LORD ROBERTS.

1832–

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XII

THE WANING CENTURY

ONCE again the course of an English Administration was disturbed by events occurring in Paris. During the earlier part of January, 1858, no one could have had the slightest reason to imagine that anything was likely to happen which could shake the seemingly strong government of Lord Palmerston. But on the 14th of January, 1858, Felice Orsini, an Italian exile who had suffered long imprisonment in an Austrian dungeon, made an attempt on the life of the Emperor of the French; and the attempt was believed to have been part of a murderous conspiracy got up amongst a certain class of Italian exiles who were sheltered in London. The affair created, naturally, immense commotion in Paris; for the attempt cost the lives of many persons wholly unconcerned with any organisation for or against the political growth of Italy. The Emperor and the Empress escaped uninjured from the explosion of the bombs in the Rue Lepelletier; but ten persons were killed and one hundred and fifty were wounded. In the not unnatural passion of the moment French public opinion fixed the blame on

England, because England, it was said, had allowed herself to be made the sheltering ground of foreign assassins. A despatch was written by the French Government to the English Foreign Minister suggesting that something ought to be done to strengthen the laws of England so that the country should not be allowed to become the camping ground for conspirators and assassins. Lord Palmerston introduced a measure called the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, the object of which was to increase the penalties on the members of political organisations which had for their object to compass the death of political opponents. The public of England became filled with anger against Lord Palmerston on the assumption that he had prepared this measure merely in obedience to the dictation of the French Government, and that he was altering the laws of England at the command of the Emperor of the French. It was the especial complaint of Englishmen and English newspapers that Lord Palmerston had not even answered the Despatch of the French Government and had therefore seemed by his silence to admit that its accusations were true, and that England had not taken adequate measures to prevent her soil from becoming the shelter and the camping ground of political assassins. There was hot temper on both sides; and the result, so far as England was concerned, was that Lord Palmerston's measure was defeated on its second reading by a majority of 234 against 215 votes. Lord Palmerston resigned: and the Ministry of Lord Derby came into power. Mr. Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Stanley, son of Lord Derby, and

whom most of us remember as successor to the title, took office as Colonial Secretary. Lord Stanley was then a comparatively young man, a man of undoubted ability, of great practical knowledge, a calm thinker, a profound student of political economy, a thinker who belonged to the school of John Stuart Mill, a man who had travelled as English statesmen had seldom travelled in those days, who knew India and the United States and Canada, and whose intellectual gifts were a theme of wonder as well as of admiration to the ordinary Tory Member of either House of Parliament. Lord Stanley, however, had none of his father's eloquence and little of his father's energy; he was a thinking man rather than a politician; and his career did not realise the great expectations which were formed at its outset. General Peel became Secretary for War.

It is not necessary to give the names of the other members of the Administration, except, indeed, that of the new Solicitor-General, Sir Hugh Cairns, who afterwards became Lord Cairns, and won a distinguished position both as politician and as lawyer. Mr. Disraeli at least must have had one great and unselfish ambition gratified by the action of this short-lived ministry. Mr. Disraeli belonged to an ancient Jewish family and was the son of Isaac Disraeli, a Jew who had a name which still survives in English literature. Benjamin Disraeli was received into the Jewish community when a child; but in very early years became a convinced Christian. Yet he had none of the turn of mind which has made so many a convert look back with a kind of shame and repug-

nance to the sect which he had quitted. Disraeli through all his political career had manfully, honourably, and consistently stood up for the civil and political rights of the Jews. For a long time the Jews had been excluded from all public office and from the right of representation in this country. Every office which a Jew could possibly have held under other conditions, and every seat which otherwise he might have taken in either House of Parliament, was kept from him because as a condition precedent to its acceptance he would have had to take an oath which repudiated the faith of his fathers and of himself. Against this stupid and barbaric kind of legislation all true reformers of England had been battling for many years. But somehow or other bigotry always seemed, even while forced to emancipate other sects and denominations, to find some way of keeping up the exclusion against the Jews. We have already in the course of this history mentioned the fact that while the Test and Corporations Act of 1828 removed this disability as regarded those whom we call Dissenters in the ordinary sense of the term, it introduced a new declaration containing the words "on the true faith of a Christian," which as a matter of course no Jew could consent to utter. Through session after session, by reformer after reformer, attempts had been made to admit members of the Jewish faith to Parliament. It was on one of those occasions that Macaulay made his first speech in the House of Commons; and he spoke, it is hardly necessary to say, in favour of the admission of the Jews. When a Bill was lucky enough to pass through

the House of Commons in favour of admitting Jews to Parliament it was immediately thrown out by the House of Lords. Some distinguished Jews like Baron Lionel Rothschild were actually elected Members of the House of Commons and endeavoured to take their seats there, but were not allowed to do so because they refused to make a declaration "on the true faith of a Christian." It remained for the Ministry, of which Mr. Disraeli was the leader in the House of Commons, to carry the reform to a legitimate success,-and to succeed in opening the House of Commons to the properly elected Jew as well as the properly elected Christian.

The closing days of 1859 were made memorable by the death of Lord Macaulay. We have already in this book borne tribute to the services which Macaulay had rendered to many a great political cause. But he will be remembered in English history as the literary man rather than as the politician. He was, undoubtedly, a great success as a speaker in the House of Commons, in spite of a somewhat defective manner and an unattractive, uninspiring presence. His success as an orator was due chiefly to the literary charms of his style, to the vividness of his illustrations and his sarcasm, to his happy allusions and his inexhaustible wealth of citation. It is a commonly received dogma that a spoken essay never succeeds in the House of Commons; but Macaulay's speeches, although they were spoken essays undoubtedly, were at the time a complete success there; and it is positively affirmed by those who can remember the events that no man ever filled the House of

Commons more certainly than Macaulay did when he rose to take part in a debate. He is now remembered, however, not as the Member of Parliament but as the essayist, the historian, and the ballad-writer. Towards the close of his life he was raised to the peerage ; and his friends confidently hoped that he would be able to take a commanding part in the debates of the House of Lords. But his health broke down almost suddenly ; he had overtasked himself, and probably his four years' residence in India, where he held the post of legal adviser to the Supreme Council, was not without injurious effect on his physical condition. He was only in his sixtieth year when he died on the 28th of December, 1859, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey during the first week of 1860.

The 23rd of June, 1860, is fairly entitled to be called a remarkable day in modern English history. It was the occasion of the Great Review by the Queen and the Prince Consort of the whole newly-formed army of Volunteers in Hyde Park. The Volunteer companies, numbering about twenty thousand men, were reviewed by her Majesty in the presence of several members of the Royal Family and the King of the Belgians. A vast crowd of people assembled in the Park to see this splendid spectacle, and the whole day passed off without a single serious accident. About fourteen thousand of the Volunteers belonged to the metropolis itself, and about six thousand to the provinces. The movement at that time was only in what might be called its infancy. Like many other movements in modern English history, it owed its existence to events which were going

on in France. The sudden rise of Louis Napoleon and the warlike policy which France, under its new Bonapartist government seemed likely to pursue, filled the minds of many influential Englishmen with a sense of the pressing necessity of a defensive organisation in England. A circular was issued on May 12, 1859, by General Peel, brother of the great Sir Robert Peel, and Secretary for War at that time, proposing the organisation of a National Volunteer Association. Out of this grew the whole Volunteer Association as we have since known it. Volunteer corps had been established from time to time in earlier days for defensive purposes; but the Volunteer system, which is still in growth and has already assumed vast dimensions, and is a part of the regular military defence of the country, owes its origin to the movement of 1859.

In March, 1860, appeared the volume called "Essays and Reviews," by six clergymen and one layman of the Church of England, a book which was destined to create something like a commotion among the religious denominations and also among the freethinkers of these countries. The book was a series of essays on religious subjects, and among its writers were the Rev. Dr. Temple, now Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rev. Mark Pattison, and Professors Jowett and Baden Powell. The volume was condemned by Convocation and was the occasion of prolonged proceedings in ecclesiastical courts.

Another agitation which had to do with religious subjects was created by the introduction of the Census Bill in 1860. According to the ordinary course since

1801 the census of the United Kingdom is taken every ten years. An Act of Parliament authorising the census is passed in the Parliamentary Session preceding the year in which the census is actually taken. This is almost always merely a work of routine and excites no opposition, but in the Census Bill of 1860 the Government introduced a clause making religious profession a part of the return which every person was called upon to supply. A strong objection was made to this clause by many of the dissenting bodies, and indeed by large numbers of persons who were not dissenters, on the ground that to compel people to disclose their religious profession was an interference with liberty of conscience. The Government yielded to pressure, the clause was withdrawn, and the census was taken in the usual form.

On the 14th of December, 1861, the Prince Consort died of typhoid fever at Windsor Castle. The news came not only as a national shock, for that it would have been in any case, but as a surprise also, for the public in general did not know how dangerous was the malady, or suspect how near was the end. The Prince Consort had been a most devoted husband and a model father. His position in England had been one of considerable difficulty, for there were critics inclined to find fault if he made himself too prominent in public life, and there were others equally ready to find fault with him if he showed a desire to hold himself too far aloof. He bore himself, however, with admirable discretion on the whole, and was as blameless in public as in private life. It was well said of him that he would have made an unequalled

Minister of Public Education in perpetual office. The cause of international peace lost a true friend in him. He died, indeed, at a moment when the country could ill have spared him. The great Civil War in the American Republic had just broken out. Something like a quarrel had arisen between this country and the Federal Government in consequence of the seizure of the Confederate envoys on board the English steamer *Trent* by the United States sloop of war *San Jacinto.* The quarrel was settled in the end, but in the meantime there was much ill-feeling caused in the Federal States by the knowledge that the great majority of those who constitute what in England is called "society" were, for some reason or other, impassioned partisans of the Southern or rebel States. The latest advice which the dying Prince gave on public affairs recommended calmness and friendly forbearance on the part of England in the dispute about the seizure of the Confederate envoys. A distinguished American historian, Dr. Draper, wrote of him in words that may well be quoted. "One illustrious man there was," he says, "who saw that the great interests of the future would be better subserved by a sincere friendship with America than by the transitory alliances of Europe." The words, perhaps, are not without a special application to the conditions of the present day. Dr. Draper goes on to say that the Prince Consort "recognised the bonds of race. His prudent counsels strengthened the determination of the Sovereign that the *Trent* controversy should have an honourable and a peaceful solution. Had the desires of these, the most exalted

personages in the realm, been more completely fulfilled, the administration of Lord Palmerston would not have cast a disastrous shadow on the future of the Anglo-Saxon race." We know, by letters afterwards published, that the Sovereign and the Prince Consort felt little sympathy with the passion and panic by the influence of which England was drawn into the Crimean War. When we remember the long dispute about the *Alabama*, the bitterness and the hostile feeling it engendered on both sides of the Atlantic, we can very easily see that the untimely death of the Queen's husband was a national loss to England and a great loss to the American people as well.

On the 1st of July, 1862, the Princess Alice Maud Mary, third child and second daughter of the Queen, was married to the Grand Duke of Hesse. Her younger brother, Prince Alfred Ernest Albert, Duke of Edinburgh, and afterwards Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, received an offer of sovereignty under somewhat peculiar circumstances in the following year. The kingdom of Greece had been growing somewhat tired of its Sovereign—a German Prince named Otho, who had been set over it as the result of arrangements made by the Great Powers of Europe. The Greeks could not stand King Otho any longer; and in order to avoid the bloodshed of a struggle against an insurrection, Otho quietly and sensibly abdicated the throne. The Greeks if left to themselves would probably never have thought of setting up another Sovereign; but the Great Powers impressed upon them the necessity of keeping up the monarchical system,

and Greece had hardly any option but to comply. Greece had been under much obligation to England; and the Greeks now invited Prince Alfred to become their Sovereign. Prince Alfred himself, who was then a youth in the English navy, had no particular fancy for a precarious throne; and in any case it was understood among those who arranged the diplomacy of Europe that no prince of any of the great reigning houses should be set over the Greek Kingdom. Prince Alfred therefore declined the invitation. The second son of the King of Denmark was made King of the Greeks—the new King being a brother of our Princess of Wales. England handed over as a sort of dowry to the new Sovereignty the Ionian Islands, which had long been placed by European arrangements under the protecting government of Great Britain. The islands were eager to be united with the Kingdom of Greece; the Greeks of the Kingdom were equally anxious that their compatriots should be joined with them in one system of rule. Englishmen in general had no wish whatever to stand between the Greek populations and the objects of their own desires; and under the inspiring influence of Mr Gladstone the Greek islands became united with the Kingdom of Greece.

On the 10th of March, 1863, the marriage of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, with the Princess Alexandra, daughter of the King of Denmark, was solemnised in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. A public reception, unusual for its enthusiasm and its magnificence, had been given to the Princess on her arrival in this country three days before. The

Princess was met at Gravesend by the Prince of Wales, and an address of welcome was presented to her by the Mayor and Burgesses of the town; and later in the day the Prince and his chosen bride made a stately progress through the principal streets of the metropolis. Never before and never since was there a greater display of popular enthusiasm. The personal charms of the Princess, her graceful bearing, her sweet youthful face, the winning and cordial manner in which she endeavoured to answer every demonstration of welcome, only confirmed the idea which had already been formed of her by those who had known her, and who could tell of her at the time when she was chosen as bride to the heir of the British throne. The Queen herself was present at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, although she appeared there in a kind of formal seclusion natural and appropriate to her recent widowhood. The first child of the marriage, Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, was born on the 8th of January, 1864, and the second son, George Frederick, Duke of York, was born on the 3rd of June, 1865; and other children followed. The life of the Duke of Clarence was but short; he died on the 14th of January, 1892. The Duke of York was married to the Princess May of Teck, on 6th of July, 1893.

On the 17th of June, 1863, a great sensation was created in this country by the arrival of Captain Speke and Captain Grant, the famous African explorers, who landed at Portsmouth after their adventurous search for the sources of the Nile. The Corporation of Portsmouth presented the distinguished travellers

(From a photograph by Messrs. Russell & Son.)

H. R. H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

1841-

(From a photograph by Messrs. Russell & Son.)

H. R. H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

1844–

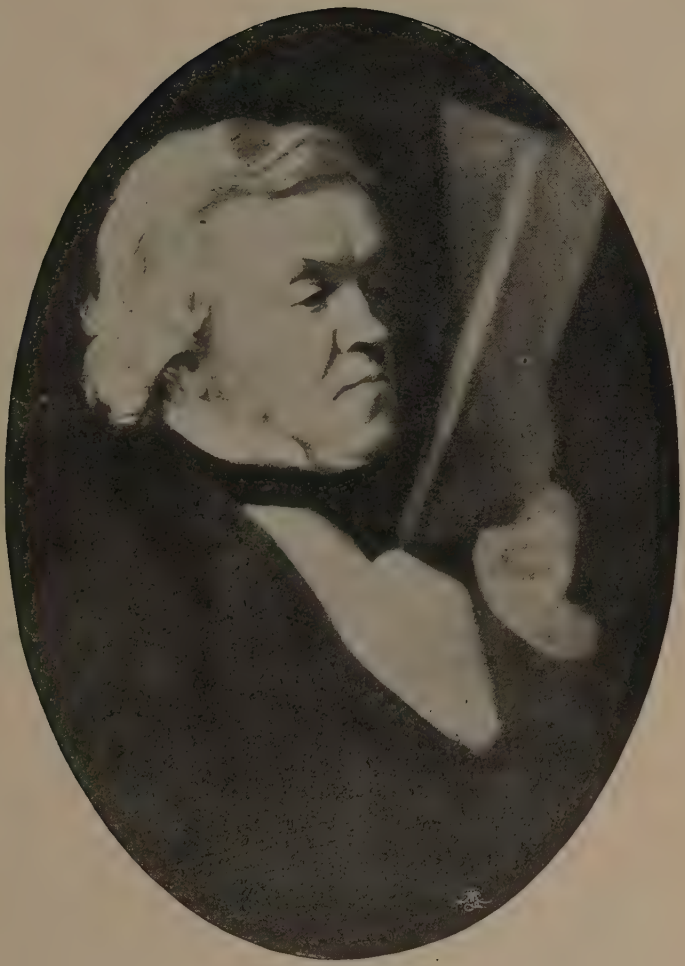
with an address which set forth the pride that must be felt by all Englishmen in welcoming back those "whose recent discoveries have solved the perplexing problem of all ages by ascertaining the true source of one of the most wonderful rivers on the face of the earth." Speke and Grant were received with special honours by the Royal Geographical Society and were applauded as heroes and victors wherever they went through England. The career of Captain Speke came to a sudden and melancholy close. The British Association held its annual meeting at Bath on September 16, 1864. Every one looked forward with the keenest interest to the appearance of Speke and Grant at the meeting of the Association, all the more because it was expected that a discussion as to the actual source of the Nile was to take place between Speke and Captain Burton, afterwards Sir Richard Burton, the famous explorer. On the very day before that which was set apart for the discussion Captain Speke joined a shooting party and was killed by the accidental discharge of his gun while he was getting over a low stone wall. The shock produced by this utterly unexpected calamity diffused, it is not too much to say, a gloom over the whole country.

England lost one of her famous sons the very day after Captain Speke's death, by the passing away at Florence of Walter Savage Landor, poet, essayist, and scholar. Landor had been for some time self-exiled from his native country, and was a resident of Florence, where he died. He was in his ninetieth year when he ceased to live. He must be assigned a place among men of genius. His ways were somewhat

eccentric ; and he was given to discovering and cherishing grievances, and with such a temperament was naturally apt to get involved in personal quarrels. But he had a thoroughly noble nature ; and he left to his native country and to all lovers of literature a bequest of exquisite prose and of noble verse.

The year 1863 saw also in its later days the death of another great Englishman. On the morning of Christmas Eve, 1863, Thackeray was found dead in his bed at his house in Kensington. He had suffered much from malarial fever caught in Rome some years before ; and he had indeed little spared himself in his devotion to the literary work which he loved so well. He will rank among the greatest of English novelists. He was only in his fifty-third year when he died. As his friend and literary rival Charles Dickens put it in a touching tribute of regret : "The same mother who had blessed him in his first sleep, blessed him also in his last."

In the meantime the long career of Lord Palmerston was drawing to a close. Palmerston had returned to office in 1859 as Prime Minister by virtue of a sort of compromise among the leaders of the Liberal party. Disraeli, foreseeing that a Reform Bill must come before very long, tried his hand at a sort of Reform scheme, which proved a grotesque failure in the House of Commons. It was all made up of what Mr. Bright called "fancy franchises," and took no account whatever of the whole mass of the working classes who were left out in the cold by the Great Reform Bill of 1832. Disraeli's measure was rejected by a large majority in the House of Commons on the



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.
1811–1863.

motion of Lord John Russell, and the Conservative party appealed to the country. The General Election gave the Liberals a majority, but not what is called a "working majority"—not a majority large enough to enable them to have their own way and to defy their political opponents. Then it was that by the compromise among the Liberals Palmerston was considered the man most likely to carry on the Government with success, and he therefore became Prime Minister in the new administration. But he had no hold over the rising Liberals in or out of Parliament. He never ceased to be popular in the House of Commons, because he always kept the House in good humour by his high spirits, his capital jokes, and his pleasant, easy, rollicking way of taking things in general. Men like Cobden and Bright put up with him because they thought he might be induced to support some schemes of financial reform which were dear to them, and also because Mr. Gladstone had taken office under him as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Gladstone, who was by far the greatest financial statesman the country had seen since the death of Sir Robert Peel, succeeded during 1860 in carrying a measure which enabled the French people to get many of our manufactured articles without paying a heavy duty on them, and allowed the English people to obtain the light and wholesome wines of France at a much cheaper price than before by the great reduction of the duty. The introduction of these light wines was a very successful attempt to bring about a wholesome change in the drinking habits of the

people of these islands. The heavier wines, the ports, into the manufacture of which brandy entered largely, were commonly discarded for cheap, light, and healthful clarets. The effect of the change may be seen to this day. This financial arrangement with France, and the commercial treaty which embodied it, were the result of what may be called a private negotiation between Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French, and Richard Cobden. The suggestion came originally from Mr. Bright, but Cobden carried it into effect. He went over to Paris, entered into long conversations with the Emperor of the French, and succeeded in convincing him that much benefit would arise to the people of both States from the adoption of a commercial treaty. No Englishman but Mr. Cobden could possibly have managed the business with so much success. His intimate knowledge of the commercial affairs of both States, his wonderful gift of persuasive argument, his sweet and genial temperament and his absolute sincerity, made him a power in dealing with the prejudices of statesmen and classes on both sides of the Channel. He had the cordial assistance of Prince Napoleon, the Emperor's cousin, and of Michel Chevalier, the French political economist. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright may be said to have carried the measure in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston probably did not care much about the whole business, but he had no particular objection to it, and he allowed Mr. Gladstone to have his own way. In the same session, 1860, Mr. Gladstone carried through the House of Commons his great measure for the abolition of the

duty on paper, which was rejected by the House of Lords, but which the House of Lords found it impossible to resist when Mr. Gladstone pressed it upon them in the following year. We shall have something to say about this great reform when we come, later on, to speak of Mr. Gladstone's whole career; for the present we are merely concerned with the closing years of Palmerston's administration. Palmerston, in fact, was maintained in power by the financial reforms of Mr. Gladstone, and by the support which, because of those reforms, men like Cobden and Bright gave to the Palmerston Government. Palmerston had offered office to Cobden, but Cobden did not see his way to accept it: Cobden had differed too often and too long from Lord Palmerston on great questions of public policy to feel inclined to attach himself to Lord Palmerston's Ministry, even with Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Meanwhile new ideas, new conditions of public feeling, and a renewed earnestness for popular reform were coming into force, and Lord Palmerston had little sympathy with them. He was beginning to belong to an old-fashioned period of political life, and did not feel inclined to take up with any new notions which were likely to give him trouble. He never was a statesman who took very exalted ideas of a statesman's duty; and, as has been said already, his great interest had never been with questions of domestic policy, and he had rather a dislike to be troubled with the business of domestic reform. He was growing old. Although to the end his mind never lost its elasticity, and his

movements kept an almost juvenile springiness, and his intellect was not dimmed in the least, yet, during the later part of the session of 1865, those who came into close association with him noticed that time and work were telling on him.

He had been an unsparing worker, and found a kind of pleasure in congenial work. He loved a country life and the pursuits of a country gentleman, and yet he doomed himself to the drudgery of office and the incessant toil of the House of Commons as if he could never grow old. His abstemious habits stood him in good stead, for the joviality of his manner was accompanied by a temperateness in dietary which might have suited an anchorite. He lived long enough to take part in the tribute of public honour paid to Mr. Cobden's memory on the death of that great Englishman early in April, 1865. The last time the writer of this volume saw Lord Palmerston was on one of the latest days of that session, and then he sprang to the saddle of the horse, which was waiting for him in Palace Yard, with the ease and vigour of a young man. He died on the 18th of October, 1865, just within two days of the completion of his eighty-first year. Many great statesmen since Queen Victoria's accession to the throne lived longer than Lord Palmerston; but not one maintained more thoroughly the fulness of life to the very end.

On the 25th of August, 1867, the world of science lost one of its brightest ornaments by the death of Michael Faraday. Faraday died at Hampton Court in his seventy-sixth year. His great career had come from

SIR RICHARD OWEN.
1804–1892.

a very humble beginning. He was born at Newington Butts, on the south side of London, and was the son of a blacksmith. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to a bookbinder; and the occupation gave him some occasional time to devote to the study of science, which he pursued with an eagerness and precocity worthy of Pascal himself. He had the good fortune to be able to attend some of the lectures of the late Sir Humphry Davy on chemistry, and these lectures exercised a guiding influence over the whole turn of his intellect. He had taken notes of them; and he wrote a letter to Sir Humphry Davy enclosing his notes and soliciting the help of the great chemist in order that he might be able to pursue his studies in the science which he loved. Davy proved an appreciative and generous patron; obtained a position for him as assistant in the laboratory of the Royal Institution; and afterwards took him as a travelling companion in a journey on the Continent. Thenceforward the career of Faraday was clear; and he is considered as the founder of the science of magnetico-electricity. Faraday, like Richard Owen, and Huxley and Tyndall, was not only a great scientific authority, but also a most clear, fascinating and brilliant lecturer. His lectures at the Royal Institution and during the sittings of the British Association kept his audience literally enthralled by their eloquence of style and their exquisite expression. Unlike some of the great modern teachers of science, Faraday had a deeply religious mind; and the more he studied in the ways of science, the more profoundly convinced he became as to the immortal truths of the

doctrines of Christianity. His name was honoured all over the world where scientific discovery and scientific research found appreciation. He had not laboured for fame; he had laboured only for science and for truth. With him, science and religious truth were one; but his fame soon found him, and will remain with him so long as the scientific world has its story to tell and its heroes to honour.

On the 7th of May, 1868, a long career of genius, of political eloquence and of restless energy came to a close—Lord Brougham died at Cannes, a place which he loved and made the home of whatever restful time he had in his later years, a place which he may be said to have discovered for the English public in general. We have already in this book followed the whole of Brougham's public career. We have described his eloquence and his energy, his indomitable public spirit, his fearless advocacy of many a great cause, and we have not hesitated to point to some of the many defects which too often marred his judgment and even disfigured his generous nature. He made many devoted friends, but he made also many bitter enemies. There were times when he could not control his own eloquence, when his mere volubility of speech carried him away as if it were a flood and brought him now and then to rhetorical confusion and wreck. He had a passion for knowing everything, and for doing everything. It was not in his nature to admit that there was anything he did not know or anything he could not do. There have been greater orators in English public life than Lord Brougham; but hardly any English orator has filled

the same sort of place which Brougham contrived to occupy in his time. He was full of surprises, partly because he loved to surprise people, and partly, too because his temperament and nature were such that he could not help surprising people, whether he would or no. Caricature found in him, during the whole of his public career, a most tempting object for its sport. His whole appearance and manner lent itself to caricature. The marvel is how, with so many disadvantages of manner, of temper and of taste, he contrived to win for himself such a position and such a fame; but that he did win position and fame is simply a matter of fact and admits of no question. Few, indeed, are now living who can have heard him in his greatest days; but there are many of us who can remember him in days which if not his greatest were yet great enough to enable us to take the measure of his wonderful powers, and to understand how it was that he became so great a Parliamentary figure in the age of Canning and Robert Peel, of Lyndhurst and O'Connell and Derby, of Disraeli and Gladstone.

XIII

LORD BEACONSFIELD

A CAREER of brilliant struggle came at last to what must be described as its crowning success. In 1868 Mr. Disraeli became for the first time Prime Minister. *Punch* had a striking cartoon to illustrate the event—a cartoon which represented Vivian Grey sent for at last. The author of "Vivian Grey" was now Prime Minister to Queen Victoria. The event was due to the retirement of Lord Derby, who at that date was at the head of a Conservative Administration. Lord Derby had for some time been in a feeble condition of health; and he thought it prudent to give up the overtaxing work which necessarily comes on the leader of a Government, who is as energetic and as unsparing of himself as Lord Derby always was. In February, 1868, Lord Derby made up his mind that he must retire from the position of Prime Minister, and the Queen reluctantly accepted his resignation. The public, in general, heard with regret the news of Lord Derby's retirement and of the cause which had brought it about. His political opponents, as well as his political supporters, admired

TENNIEL.

1820–

alike his brilliant talents, his Parliamentary eloquence, and his literary culture. He had changed his opinion more than once on political subjects; but no one ever questioned his sincerity and his integrity; and there was something frank and chivalrous about him which won for him a general sympathy. He had given remarkable evidences of scholarship and of poetic taste; and his translation of Homer's Iliad was regarded as one of the best versions of the great poem in the English language. We may take our leave of Lord Derby now, for his life came to an end the year after his resignation, and his retirement from the position of Prime Minister was, in fact, the close of his political career. The moment his retirement was announced, the eyes of all men concerned in political affairs turned at once to Mr. Disraeli. Disraeli had made a hard fight against many difficulties; for nearly ten long years he had been a failure in the House of Commons, and it was only when everybody was beginning to set him down as a hopeless failure that he suddenly found a splendid opportunity and made splendid use of it; and from that time forth his career went higher and higher on towards success. Everybody knew that he was ambitious; indeed, he made no secret himself about the strength of his ambition; but the feeling of the public in general was that he had played his part gallantly, and that he was entitled to his full reward. Somehow or other he was not taken quite seriously as a statesman; that is to say, no one thought of applying to his career the same rigid code of criticism that would have been applied to the career of some

of his contemporaries. The term "opportunist," which is now so familiar in political life, had not come into use in Mr. Disraeli's time, or else he would probably have been described as an opportunist of the most ready and most dexterous capabilities. Nobody doubted, however, his personal integrity; and nobody questioned that, with all his curious changes of position, his sudden advances and his sudden retreats, he had a sincere desire to promote the greatness of the Empire according to his own definition of Imperial greatness. At all events, it is certain that there was a general sense of satisfaction when Mr. Disraeli was invited to accept the position of Prime Minister. In constructing his Administration, Mr. Disraeli made but few changes in the personal arrangements left to him by his predecessor. One of the changes, however, was important, and although it was the source of some severe criticism at the time, especially among the Tory Party, it testified before long to Disraeli's judgment and his wise resolve. This change consisted in the removal of Lord Chelmsford from the position of Lord Chancellor, which he had occupied under Lord Derby, and the elevation of Lord Cairns to his place. The profound legal knowledge and the brilliant Parliamentary eloquence of Lord Cairns have been already mentioned in this book; and there can be no doubt that he will always be remembered as one of the great Lord Chancellors of England. Disraeli's Administration proved to be very active in its work. One remarkable and most commendable piece of legislation accomplished by the new Govern-

ment was the Act prohibiting executions, in public. For a long time a sense of horror and loathing against the system of public executions had been growing up in the breast of every man of education and feeling throughout the country. An execution in any of the great towns was then a hideous exhibition. It was a scene of drunken revelry a very carnival of demoralising brutality. No rational being could possibly doubt that each such public exhibition had its terrible effect in debauching the minds of the spectators, so that the death of one criminal tended to create fresh criminals for a future scaffold. If the system of capital punishment is to continue, if it is necessary to the welfare of our social system that crime should have its punishment by death, it is at least a public advantage that the sentence should be carried out within the precincts of the prison as it is at present, and that while every care is taken to ensure that nothing shall be done in absolute secrecy, the public feeling of good citizens is not outraged, and the evil tendencies of bad citizens are not stimulated by the system which was allowed to prevail in spite of continual remonstrance during so many centuries in Great Britain and Ireland.

The Conservative Government made another change in the antique ways of the Constitutional system, which was certainly more open to question than the abolition of the public execution, but which is, on the whole, fairly entitled to be considered a measure of reform. This was the change in the law with regard to the disposal of election petitions. An election petition is a claim made by

a defeated candidate at a Parliamentary contest, or by his friends on his behalf, for the seat in the House of Commons which an apparent majority of votes at the election has given to his rival. It might, for instance, be asserted by the defeated candidate that the election of the successful man had been brought about by bribery and corruption, or by some irregularity in the manner of counting the votes, by persons being admitted to vote who were not legally entitled to the suffrage, or by the fraudulent votes of persons who assumed names and qualifications which did not belong to them. It is manifest, of course, that every election contest must be open to the revising power of some sort of tribunal, for otherwise it would be impossible that the public could feel certain whether a man elected to a seat in the House of Commons had really the approval of the majority of the constituents. Up to the time of which we are now speaking, the decision had been in the hands of the House of Commons itself. In other words, when an election had taken place and an election petition was presented claiming the seat on behalf of the defeated candidate, the custom was that the House of Commons should appoint a Select Committee of its own Members to consider the petition and to decide as to the validity of its claim. The choice of such a Select Committee obviously rested with the majority of the House of Commons; that is to say, with the Government and the Party in power. Now, the majority might be composed of men having the best intentions in the world where abstract principles were concerned; but at the same

time it is only reasonable to suppose that as human nature is constituted, most of that majority would rather see their own supporter in Parliament than a representative of the opposite Party. No Party in power would, during later generations at least, go so far as to construct a Select Committee entirely of supporters of the Party in power; there would no doubt be some representatives of opposing opinion appointed to the Committee; but it is fairly to be assumed that the majority of the Committee on any important question would be found to represent the majority of the House. Therefore, the public began to lose faith in the whole system, and a not unreasonable impression was spreading abroad that the moment the names on a Select Committee were announced, one could foretell with something like accuracy the manner in which the claim of the petition would be decided. Besides it was quite certain that the practice of bribery and corruption had grown up so much in our electoral system, that public confidence and public feeling had, to a great extent, been demoralised; and a candidate thought no more of bribing a corrupt elector than the corrupt elector thought of receiving the bribe and giving his vote accordingly.

Therefore a strong force of public opinion had been growing up against the existing system, and before Lord Derby resigned office as Prime Minister it was decided that a Court should be created of three paid judges on the bench for the purpose of hearing and deciding all election petitions, and removing them absolutely and once for all out of the jurisdiction of

the House of Commons. A strong objection was made by the judges themselves to the proposal for putting on their shoulders the responsibility of these entirely new duties. Sir Alexander Cockburn, then Chief Justice of England, became the exponent of the objections made by the body of judges; and contended that the effect of such a measure would be to lower the dignity of the judicial bench, and to weaken the confidence of the public in the impartiality of the judges who would, under such an arrangement, have to decide on essentially political questions. The Government, however, did not yield to the objections; and after much discussion a Bill was brought in to refer the trial and decision of election petitions not to a court of judges, but to a single judge selected from a list to be prepared by the Judicial Bench. This measure was carried as an experiment in the first instance, but it was afterwards renewed and may now be considered one of the permanent institutions of the country. The fears entertained by the judges have not thus far been realised; and in this country, at all events, no public doubt whatever has arisen as to the strict impartiality of the judge to whom is confided the hearing and the decision of election petitions. Mr. Disraeli's Government also had the satisfaction of announcing the successful conclusion of the Abyssinian Expedition—an expedition sent out under the command of Sir Robert Napier, afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala, for the rescue of some British subjects and others who were held in captivity by Theodore, the king of the country. The expedition had to encounter the most tremendous

natural difficulties, but it accomplished all its objects and, with a loss so slight as to be hardly worth mentioning, succeeded in capturing King Theodore's capital. King Theodore was found dead, slain by his own hand inside the gate of the capital which he could no longer defend. The Government did not entertain the idea of annexing the capital or any part of Abyssinia; but, having accomplished the object of the expedition, made a quick and safe return to England.

Mr. Disraeli remained but a short time at the head of the Government. In Home politics difficulties were thickening and darkening around him. It has been already shown in the course of this history that he had succeeded before he became Prime Minister in outbidding Mr. Gladstone in the struggle for the extension of the Parliamentary suffrage. The Irish Question, however, proved fatal to his administration. The Fenian agitation had culminated in an insurrection which was but partial in its extent and was soon put down, but which left in the minds of all observant and thinking men the strong conviction that Ireland was suffering from a political malady which it was the business and the duty of statesmanship to cure. An Irish member of high character and great ability, the late Mr. John Francis Maguire, brought forward a motion for the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons to take into consideration the state of Ireland, with a view to discovery of some effectual remedial measures. Mr. Gladstone threw his soul into the question; and declared that the first measure of remedy ought to be the disestablishment

and disendowment of the State Church in Ireland. Our readers have already had explained to them the conditions of the monstrous anomaly which was called a State Church in Ireland—the Established and Endowed Church in which only a very small minority of the population of Ireland had any interest or any faith. Mr. Maguire, of course, promptly withdrew his resolution when the commanding voice of Mr. Gladstone had spoken, and Mr. Gladstone became the leader of the movement for the extinction of the Irish Church as a State supported establishment. The Ministers were defeated on the resolutions proposed by Mr. Gladstone ; and Mr. Disraeli resigned, but returned to office pending an appeal to the country by a General Election. The appeal to the country had for its result the return of the Liberal party to office ; and the Irish Church was Disestablished and Disendowed with a reserve, so far as the disendowment was concerned, for living interests—that is, for the interests of those already holding ecclesiastical office ; and thus the Irish State Establishment was converted into a free Episcopalian Church.

Mr. Disraeli, with whose career we are at present especially concerned, came back to office in 1874. During his second Premiership his Government introduced one measure which was undoubtedly satisfactory so far as it went—a measure to protect British seamen against the increasing dangers of unseaworthy ships. The agitation which ended in this wholesome measure was begun by the late Mr. Samuel Plimsoll, a private member of the House of Commons, a man

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

of the most sincere and philanthropic purpose, a man of boundless energy who denounced the whole system of insuring unseaworthy vessels, and then sending them out upon the deep to perish with their crews if the chance should arise. Some of the debates which were originated by Mr. Plimsoll will long be remembered in the House of Commons. There were critics who thought Mr. Plimsoll went too far; there were critics who found fault with the superabundant energy of his denunciation; but Mr. Plimsoll carried his point so far at least as to compel the Government to take the first step in the suppression of an odious and calamitous system. The measure did not go so far as Mr. Plimsoll would have wished it to go; but it was a new departure and it set up a new and beneficent principle in legislation. Mr. Disraeli, by the purchase of the Viceroy of Egypt's shares, made the British Empire part-owner of the Suez Canal—a measure which was severely commented upon and ridiculed at the time, but which, on the whole, seems to have been amply justified by the necessity of preserving a free highway for vessels to our Indian possessions. Moreover, Mr. Disraeli succeeded in conferring on the Queen, by Parliamentary legislation, the new title of Empress of India. This measure, too, excited a strong opposition and was the object of much sarcasm and ridicule. What, it was asked by the opponents of the measure, did the Queen want of a trumpery new title? Was it not better for the historic dignity of the country that she should retain unchanged the title which had come down to her from Alfred and Elizabeth and William

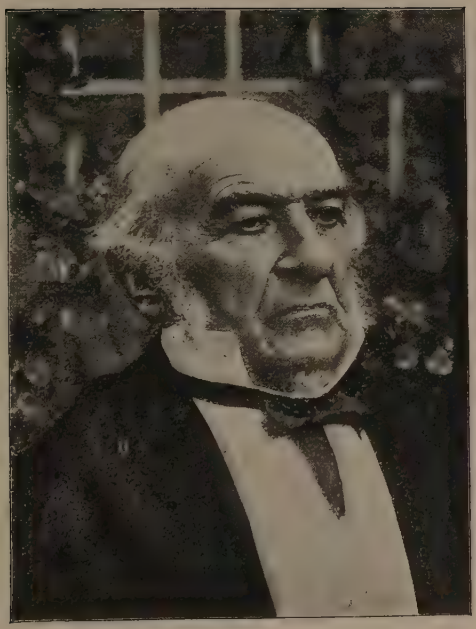
III., and Anne, and the Georges. Many sparkling speeches were delivered on both sides of the question; and many gloomy prophecies were uttered as to the effect which the assumption of the new style would have on some of the populations of India. Mr. Disraeli stood, however, by his proposition. He answered sarcasm with sarcasm, prophecy with prophecy; and the whole scheme and its discussion must have gratified intensely his love for the magnificent in politics. Perhaps, on calm reflection, we shall now, most of us, be agreed that the measure, if it did no particular good, did at all events no particular harm. India has gone on in much the same way as ever; and it was understood that the title Empress of India was only to be used on occasions, and on coins, and on documents, which had specially to do with the affairs of India. But the Queen was not the only recipient of a new title as the result of Mr. Disraeli's second administration. It will be remembered that when Disraeli resigned his office of Prime Minister because of Mr. Gladstone's conquering majority in 1868, his wife obtained the honour of a peerage in her own right, and became Viscountess Beaconsfield. In the same year which saw the creation of the title Empress of India Mr. Disraeli himself consented to pass into the House of Lords as the Earl of Beaconsfield. His wife had held her title but a short time, and had died four years before her husband became Earl of Beaconsfield. In Disraeli's earlier days he had expressed a strong conviction that he was destined to try his eloquence in the House of Lords; and he had succeeded in fulfilling his prophecy. There was a

general feeling of gratification that, as he cared to be Lord Beaconsfield, he should be Lord Beaconsfield. An earl's title and a place in the House of Lords would not have suited Peel or Gladstone some people said, but then Mr. Disraeli was not exactly Peel or Gladstone. There were certain grumbling persons who suggested that the title which was destined by George III. for Edmund Burke and declined by him, was not exactly the title which ought to have been conferred on the adventurous author of "Vivian Grey." But the public in general made no objection and were rather pleased than otherwise that Disraeli should be made a peer; and we shall have to show our readers that there was some public work of Imperial moment left to be performed by Lord Beaconsfield.

XIV

MR. GLADSTONE

MEANWHILE a new breath of reform had begun to animate the country. It was quite understood that so long as Lord Palmerston lived there was no real chance for any reform movement. Lord Palmerston had made himself thoroughly popular with the majority of the House of Commons. He had no interest whatever in domestic change — his sole concern was with foreign affairs; the bent of his inclination had always been that way; and no man could have more thoroughly understood the business of a Foreign Secretary, or known better how to make his skill in that direction a means of warding off inconvenient questions of reform at home. He had got the credit of holding England's head high among the nations of Europe, although the policy he pursued did not always commend itself to thoughtful and conscientious minds. No man better understood how to play the hazardous game of "bluff," and he always played his part with an eye to what may be called the gallery at home. Many a time he had contrived to avert inconvenient domestic questions



WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.
1809–1898.

by suddenly starting some subject in foreign affairs which appeared to claim immediate attention. He was immensely popular with the Tories; for they knew that he was just as little inclined towards democratic movements at home as they could be; and they knew that he could manage the House of Commons in a manner quite beyond the scope of any of their recognised leaders. He was popular, too, for just the same reason with those of the Liberals who were afraid of democratic movements, and afraid of leaders who were too fond of encouraging rational agitation for reform. So when Lord Palmerston died every one felt that the season of reaction, or even of contented apathetic quietude, was over and done with, and that a new epoch of reform was about to open. The Queen sent for Lord Russell and invited him to form a new administration. Lord Russell was then in the House of Lords as Earl Russell. He became Prime Minister; and Mr. Gladstone, retaining his Office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, found himself for the first time leader of the House of Commons. From that event until Mr. Gladstone's retirement from parliamentary life the political history of England's nineteenth century is the story of Gladstone's career.

We have now to retrace our steps for a little in order to survey the ground more closely. Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone at once set about a new Reform Bill intended to supply some of the defects of the measure introduced into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell thirty-five years before. The new measure had for its main object

the extension of the suffrage both in counties and in boroughs, bringing the franchise down in counties from fifty pounds to fourteen pounds and in boroughs from ten pounds a year to seven pounds a year, and making many other alterations to the same general effect. The fate of this Bill is a curious chapter in our modern political history. The measure was accepted by Mr. Bright, who had now a power in the House of Commons and with the country second only to that of Mr. Gladstone himself. The new Reform scheme did not go far enough for Bright; but he accepted it because he was anxious that some movement should be made in the direction of a real popular suffrage; and he did not think that under all the conditions there was anything better to be done at the time. But there remained a considerable number of Radicals in the House of Commons, and a large number of Radicals of all classes outside it, who thought the measure fell short of what might have been reasonably expected, and who, while following the course recommended by Bright, had little heart for the work, and put up with the Bill rather than welcomed it. On the other hand it is needless to say that Disraeli and all the Tories were heartily opposed to any extension of the suffrage. Then that happened which, as we have already shown, happens very often in the history of the Reform movement—a considerable number of Liberals seceded from the ranks of the Reformers, and gave their support to the Tory side. Among these was one man who particularly distinguished himself in the battle against the Reform Bill, Mr. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke.

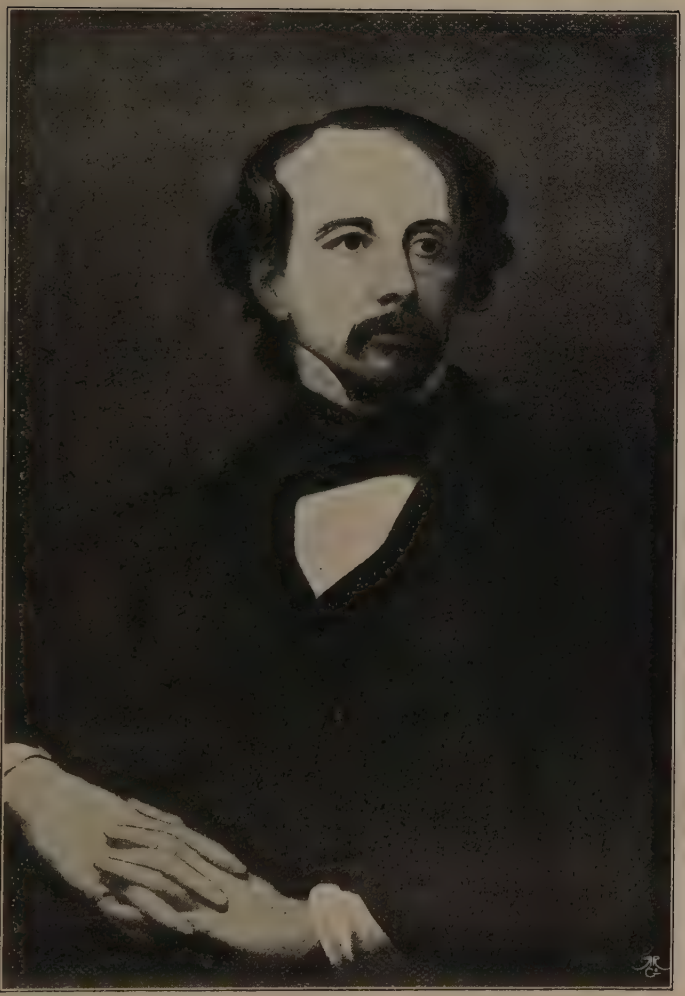
Mr. Lowe was a man of great and genuine ability, much literary culture, and some scholarship. Although his voice and his manner were much against him as a debater, he had a brilliant and incisive style of speaking, was a master of sarcasm, of apt satirical quotation, and of epigrammatic phrase-making. Lowe became practically the leader of the Anti-reform battle ; and for the time threw even Disraeli himself into the shade, and was the hero of the hour with the Tories and with the half-hearted Liberals. After some brilliant debates in which Gladstone, Disraeli, Bright, and Lowe showed at their very best, the measure was ultimately defeated in Committee of the House of Commons, and Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone went out of office. Mr. Disraeli at once came back to power, and Great Britain and Ireland were agitated from end to end by the impassioned demand for a measure of popular suffrage. The whole of the recess was occupied by great meetings of Reformers all over the country, and by demonstrations which recall to memory the old troublous times of the great Reform Bill. Then once again the unexpected came to pass; what nobody could have looked for was the very thing that happened. Disraeli mentally surveying the whole situation came to the conclusion that it would be utterly impossible to delay for long the passing of a comprehensive measure of Reform ; and he therefore made up his mind that as Reform was to come, he and his party might as well have the advantage of introducing it. So, to use his own phrase, he educated his party during the recess, and

brought most of them to an agreement with him as to the course which he proposed to adopt. Some of his colleagues, indeed, among whom was the present Marquis of Salisbury, could not see their way to an acceptance of the Reform Bill and withdrew from the Tory Government. They had always spoken and voted against Reform—such was their line of argument—they had spoken and voted against it in the very last session of Parliament, and they could not in conscience now at a moment's notice suddenly become Reformers for the mere sake of gaining a political advantage. Let us do full credit to their consistency, and to their conscience. Disraeli could not win them over to his way of dealing with the question; and for the time they quitted his camp. In the session of 1867 Disraeli brought in a Reform measure which was evidently and almost ostentatiously submitted to the House as a scheme open to alteration and improvement of any kind. Mr. Lowe had a very hard battle to fight this time; for whereas in the former session he had Disraeli on his side, he now had to fight against Gladstone, Bright, and Disraeli together. Gladstone and Bright, of course, could not refuse point blank a measure of Reform simply because it came from a Tory Ministry; and they merely did their best to get the Reform scheme improved and expanded as much as possible. In the meantime a number of the more advanced Radicals made it clearly known to Disraeli that if he did not consent to a very liberal expansion they would vote against his Bill, and the division was likely to be close enough to make their

votes a matter of important consideration. Disraeli had in his own mind no serious objection whatever to Reform; and the fact of his having opposed a Reform Bill coming from Gladstone seemed to him, doubtless, no reason whatever why he should not go farther in the direction of Reform than even Gladstone himself had gone. On one thing he appears to have been determined. Having introduced a Reform Bill he would not be defeated on it merely from a want of concession to the extreme Radicals. The result was that Disraeli consented to accept amendments to the Bill, which made it a much more popular measure of Reform than Lord Russell and Gladstone had ventured to introduce. The Bill became a scheme for the introduction of what may fairly be called a system of universal suffrage, at least of manhood suffrage, throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Disraeli knew, of course, that the Tory Party could do anything it pleased with the House of Lords, and that the House of Lords would be the great difficulty in the way of any measure of Reform coming from a Liberal Ministry. Nothing more strange has ever been seen in the history of a constitutional country with a Representative Government. Disraeli, with the help of the Liberal seceders, defeated Gladstone's measure in 1866 on the ground that it made the suffrage too low; and he carried in 1867 a measure which made the suffrage still lower. For the Bill passed through the House of Commons and also through the House of Lords; and it established the popular franchise which exists at present in these countries—a franchise approaching so nearly

to manhood suffrage that it has satisfied the country from that time to this. Gladstone could not have carried such a measure, because he would have had the Tories and the Liberal secessionists against him in the House of Commons, and could only have carried a handful of votes with him in the House of Lords. Disraeli and his Party were sure of the votes of the genuine Liberals in the House of Commons, and had absolute control of the House of Lords. So the great measure, for it really was a great measure, was carried and the suffrage question was practically settled. Disraeli and the Tories got little credit by their policy. To this day many people speak of the Reform Bill of 1867 as Gladstone's measure, because everybody knows that Mr. Gladstone's measure of 1866 forced Mr. Disraeli into rivalry, and into the resolve to go one better than his Liberal opponent; and that Lord Derby, the Tory Prime Minister, although he called the extension of the suffrage "a leap in the dark," was as much under the guidance of Disraeli as the Duke of Wellington in former days used to be under the guidance of Sir Robert Peel.

Lord Russell's great career as a Liberal leader ceased with the defeat of 1866. Mr. Gladstone, out of office, occupied much of his time in considering the subject of Irish grievances. He made up his mind that the principal grievances were three in number—that there were, as he described it, three branches of the Upas-tree which poisoned the condition of Ireland—the State Church, the Land Laws, and the lack of higher education. On March 23rd,



CHARLES DICKENS.
1812–1870.

LIBRARY

1868, Gladstone gave notice of his series of resolutions condemning the Irish Church. He carried his resolutions; Disraeli appealed to the new electoral conditions created by the recent Reform Bill, and Mr. Gladstone was returned to power by a great majority.

We must interrupt here the course of our political narrative for a moment in order to record the death of one of the great masters of English literature. Charles Dickens died suddenly in his home at Gadshill near Rochester, on June 6, 1870. Dickens had won, as a novelist, a popularity unequalled by any other English writer of stories during this century with the single exception of Sir Walter Scott. He had breathed a new life into English fiction; he was a great humourist as well as a great moralist; he was the prose poet of the poor; his very faults, his occasional extravagance and exaggeration brought humorous touches with them, which won for them quick forgiveness from his fascinated readers. His books are instinct with human sympathy on every page, and he never wrote a line which might not be read aloud in every household circle.

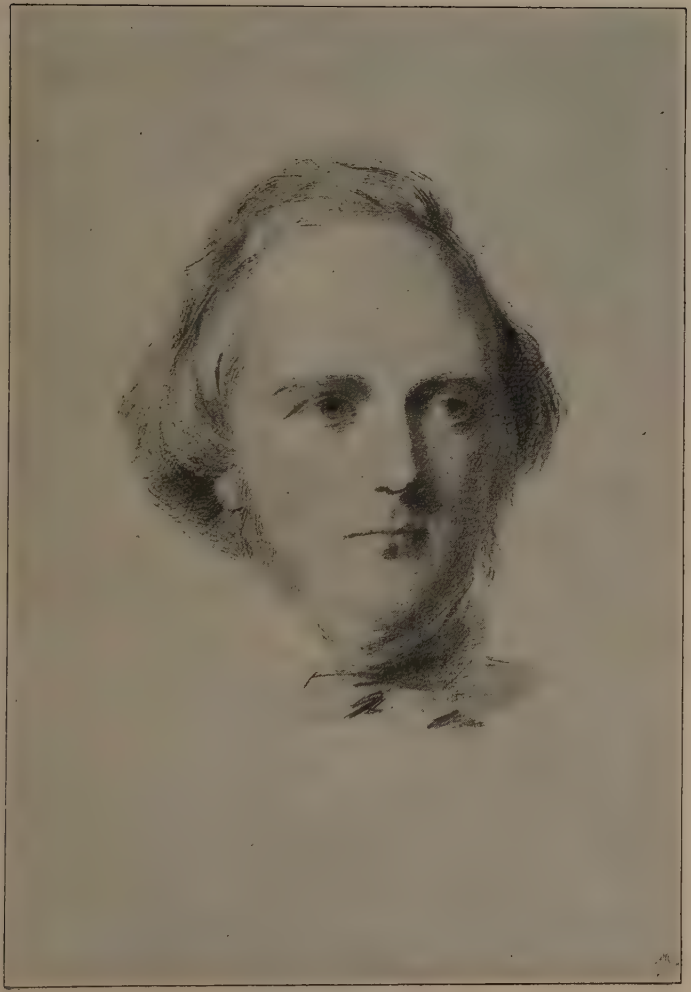
Mr. Gladstone promptly carried out two of his great promises: he disestablished the Irish State Church, and he introduced a land measure, which although it did not go as far as public opinion in Ireland thought it ought to have gone, yet released the Irish tenant from a state of absolute bondage to his landlord, and formed the basis on which subsequent Governments, Tory as well as Liberal, made further improvements in the land tenure system of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone

tried to establish a national Irish University, following out some of the ideas which Sir Robert Peel embodied in his scheme establishing the Queen's colleges in Ireland; but he did not succeed in carrying his measure. He introduced the first great scheme for the creation of a thorough system of national and compulsory education in Great Britain —a scheme which was conducted through Parliament with much skill by the late William Edward Forster. Statesmen and Parliaments had worked at something like a scheme of national education without much success since Lord Brougham in one way, and Lord John Russell in another, had made efforts to prevail on Parliament to do something real towards so great an object. Mr. Gladstone had done much also towards public education in these countries, by the measure which he introduced in 1860, and carried in the following year, for the abolition of the duty on paper, which for the first time allowed cheap daily papers to be published all over these countries, and brought the reading of the daily journals within the reach of the poorest voters in Great Britain and Ireland. During the period of wonderful activity which followed his return to office, after the General Election of 1869, he had amongst other reforms accomplished the abolition of the system of purchase in the Army, a system which made the obtaining of an officer's commission a matter of money and patronage, not of merit. The introduction of the system of voting by ballot in political and municipal elections was another of the great and successful reforms accomplished during this period of Gladstone's

a sort of bulwark to protect Western Europe from the advances of the Russian power. Gladstone was for fostering, promoting, and establishing a number of free Christian States or monarchies in the south-east of Europe, and making these the barrier against Russian ambition. There can be no doubt that with a very large proportion of the population of England the dread of Russia's growing influence was the first inspiring sentiment in the consideration of continental politics. Russia had come to be regarded by such men very much as France was regarded in the days that immediately followed the great French Revolution. When the news of the massacres of Christians in Bulgaria first reached this country, Mr. Disraeli, as he then still was, treated the stories with contempt, and regarded them as mere fables, got up by the enemies of the Turkish Government. The stories, however, were soon proved to be only too true, and Russia interposed in favour of the Christian populations, and insisted on Turkey coming to some understanding with the Great Powers of Europe, which should secure the lives and liberties of the Christian populations under the rule of the Sultan. There were long negotiations, there were evasive answers on the part of Turkey; and at last an agreement was made which would have been well enough, if it had only been kept by Turkey, but which Turkey soon showed that she had no intention of keeping.

At last Russia declared war against Turkey; and one Russian army crossed the Danube, while another began an invasion of Turkish soil in Asia Minor.

The Turks showed a splendid resisting power; and for a time it seemed as if the Russian invasion in both regions was destined to be checked, or even to be driven back. All history shows us that the Turks have been splendid fighting men, and in recent days the Turkish armies have been commanded by officers who got their training from qualified military instructors brought in from countries not under Turkish rule. It soon became plain that the Russians had made the serious mistake of undervaluing their opponents. The Sovereign of Russia at once, however, retrieved this error, and put his army under the command of that General Todleben, who has been already mentioned in this history as having made the one only great military reputation which came out of the Crimean War. From that moment victory changed sides; the Russians carried everything before them; and it soon became apparent, that so far as Turkish resistance was concerned, Russia was free to march on to the occupation of Constantinople. Then came the great crisis in English popular feeling. The immediate sensation produced in England, and more especially in the Metropolis of England, was the impulse to call out for an armed resistance to Russia's further movement. For the time all thought as to the welfare of the Christian populations passed out of the minds of most of Lord Beaconsfield's followers, and the only idea was as to the best and promptest means by which England could put a stop to Russian aggression. There can be little doubt that if Lord Beaconsfield, at that moment, had called upon the country to make war against Russia, his



DUKE OF ARGYLL.

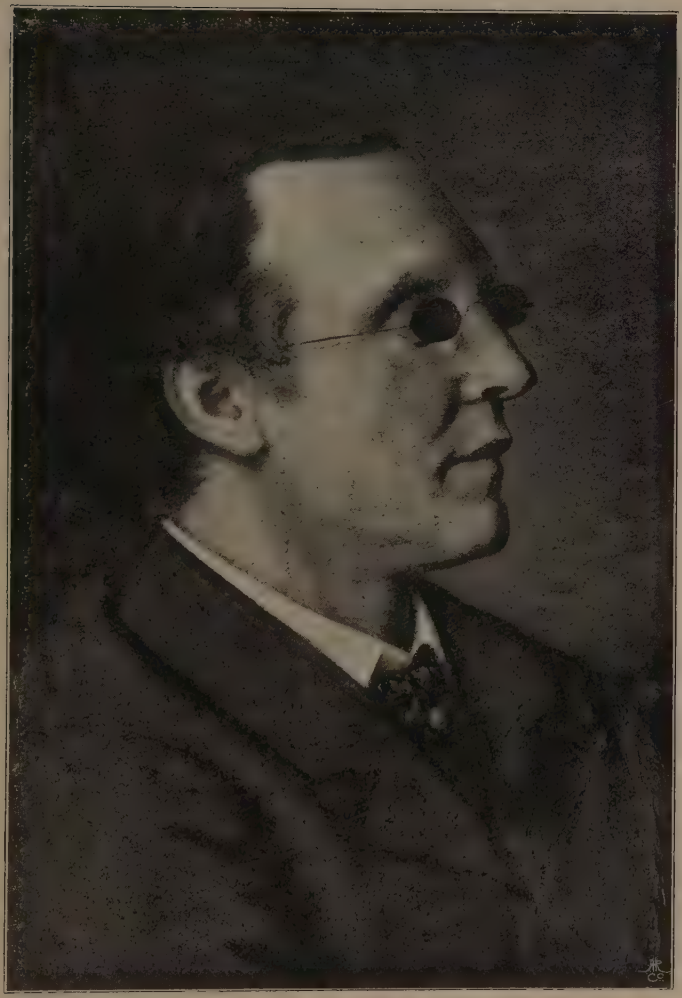
appeal would have met with an enthusiastic response from a vast number of people. There were, however, some influences of a moderating order, even in his own Cabinet. The late Lord Carnarvon was then Colonial Secretary in Lord Beaconsfield's Government, and he was strongly opposed to any rash movement coming out of mere alarm about the ambition of Russia, and he was also well known to be a sincere and enlighted friend of all the Christian populations under Turkish rule. When the Government ordered the English Fleet in the Mediterranean to pass the Dardanelles and go up to Constantinople, in order to protect Turkey against a Russian advance upon her capital, Lord Carnarvon at once resigned his place in Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. Russia entered, for the time, into a Treaty with Turkey—the famous arrangement known as the Treaty of San Stefano, by which Turkey promised to the Christian populations an almost absolute independence of Turkish rule. The English Government refused to recognise this treaty, declaring that such arrangements could only be made by the authority of the Great European Powers assembled in Congress. The Turkish Government sent round the intimation that it had been coerced into making the Treaty. Lord Beaconsfield took the unprecedented course of calling in a contingent of our Indian forces to be stationed at Malta, ready for any events that might come to pass; and at the same time he determined to occupy the Island of Cyprus as "a place of arms," with the consent and in the interests of the Ottoman Sultan. This was too much for another of his colleagues—the late Lord Derby.

We have already spoken in these pages of Lord Derby as a man of cool, clear intellect, of statesman-like understanding, not in the least likely to be led out of his straight course, either by a momentary panic or by any desire to play an imposing part in Imperial politics. Lord Derby, too, was a man who thoroughly understood the condition of the Christian populations in the south-east of Europe, and knew that all they wanted to make them contented and prosperous was to be independent of the withering rule of the Turkish Sultans. Lord Derby at once resigned the office of Foreign Secretary, and Lord Beaconsfield lost his strongest colleague in the Government. Then Prince Bismarck, the German Prime Minister, intervened and, making a stroke off his own bat, to adopt a happy expression once used by Lord Palmerston, he invited a Congress of the representatives of the Great Powers to assemble in Berlin, in order to come to some decisive agreement as to the whole Eastern Question. The interests of the Greek Kingdom were naturally much mixed up with those of Turkey's Christian population; indeed, the Island of Crete, a Greek island if ever there was one, was then actually, as it still even is nominally, under Turkish rule. Greece, after some delay and some opposition, was allowed to be represented at the Congress of Berlin. Lord Beaconsfield had now another surprise in store for the world. No English Prime Minister had ever before left the country while Parliament was sitting, to act as the Representative of his Sovereign in any foreign city. Lord Beaconsfield announced that he proposed to go to

LAW COURTS.

Berlin himself, with Lord Salisbury as his colleague, to represent the interests of England at the Congress of Berlin. The Congress ended in a Treaty to be known in history as the Treaty of Berlin, which recognised the complete independence of Roumania, of Servia and of Montenegro ; created a new state of Bulgaria, north of the Balkan Mountains, and a state to be called Eastern Roumelia, south of the Balkans, which was to be self-governing as regarded its internal administration, but was still to remain directly under the control of the Ottoman Government. Greece was promised by the Treaty some alterations of the frontier line, dividing her from the Ottoman Dominion, which promised to relieve her from some inconveniences and disadvantages. As regarded Asia, Turkey was compelled to cede three of her strong places to Russia. Lord Beaconsfield came back to England like a conquering hero, and announced in a speech, which he delivered from the windows of the Foreign Office in London, that he had brought "peace with honour." Some of the arrangements made by the Treaty of Berlin proved to be, on the whole, successful in their policy as regarded the south-east of Europe. Some of them, on the other hand, were too highly artificial in their nature to endure the strain that was put upon them. Servia and Bulgaria did not settle down into anything like stability until after a war had taken place between the two new states. The arrangement which endeavoured to set up a semi-dependent state under the name of Eastern Roumelia fell to pieces altogether, and the greater portion of what had been called

Eastern Roumelia became united with Bulgaria. Two opposing principles of policy prevailed amongst Englishmen during the arrangement for this new construction of the south-east of Europe. Lord Beaconsfield and his followers had for their first object the erection of a barrier against the supposed aggressions of Russia. Mr. Gladstone, and those who thought with him, were mainly desirous to make way for the progress as independent states of the Christian nationalities and races who, up to that time, had been under the yoke of Turkey. One of the difficulties with which European statesmanship had to deal, when endeavouring to divide the new states from the old Turkish provinces, was well described by the late Lord Derby. "The one group of nationalities," he said, "was half dead, the other was only yet half alive." The claims of Greece in especial received but little satisfaction under the new arrangement; and, indeed, all that could be said was that the settlement of the Greek question was put off once again to some more favourable opportunity, which opportunity does not seem to have come even yet. Still, on the whole, it may be assumed that the Treaty of Berlin created a number of new states independent of Turkish misrule which, thus far, have vindicated their right to independence, and have given a new life and a future to all that region of Europe. The old-fashioned devotees of Turkish rule, and the old-fashioned politicians, who were governed in everything by their dread of Russia's advance, found fault with most of the new arrangements; and, indeed, it would be impossible to deny that Russia regained



HENRY FAWCETT.
1833–1884.

many of the advantages she had lost, for the time, by the Crimean War. It did not, however, need the Treaty of Berlin to prove to most persons that the Crimean War had been fought to no purpose, so far as any enduring settlement of the Eastern Question could be concerned.

The Congress of Berlin may be considered the zenith of Lord Beaconsfield's political career. No matter what might come of the Congress, it is quite certain that it made him for a time the central figure in European politics. Up to that hour his career had been a subject of interest to the people of these countries only—the Berlin Congress made him for the first time a personage on whom all the eyes of Europe were fixed. The remainder of his course as a statesman was but an anti-climax. England became engaged in some unlucky foreign adventures, especially in Afghanistan and in South Africa. One of the South African conflicts with a native chief brought a serious check for the moment to the British arms, and has become memorable in history, because it involved the fate of the young Prince Louis Napoleon, son of the dethroned Emperor of the French, who had died in January, 1873. The dethroned Emperor and his family had lived as exiles in England, and the young Prince, impatient of an idle career in exile, volunteered to serve with our forces in the Zulu Campaign of 1879, and was surprised and killed by a party of the native warriors. At home the ever-troublous Irish Question had come up again in a new and more embarrassing form than before. Instead of any futile rising in the field there

was an organised Irish campaign in the House of Commons led by a man of extraordinary ability and energy, the late Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell. Under Mr. Parnell's leadership the new agitation took the form of organised Parliamentary obstruction. The motto of Mr. Parnell and his followers seemed to be, "If you will not spare time to discuss the claims and grievances of Ireland, you shall not be allowed to transact any other business whatever." The existing rules of Parliamentary life allowed almost limitless freedom of debate, and by the use which the new Irish Party made of this advantage, it soon became almost impossible to get on with the regular work of Parliament. Even if Lord Beaconsfield could have done anything to cope with this obstruction, had he been in the House of Commons, it is quite certain that he could do nothing whatever to cope with it, seeing that he was now relegated to the House of Lords. But the effect of the new agitation was decidedly damaging to the strength and to the reputation of his Ministry. Then, as has been said in the opening of this chapter, there was a new breath of domestic reform abroad over Great Britain and Ireland, and the breath this time blew in the direction of Ireland in particular. Lord Beaconsfield had nothing new to offer as regards the condition of Ireland. Moreover, his Ministry had nearly run its allotted course, and the natural tendency of British constituences is to get rather tired of the Ministry which is drawing towards the close of its seven years, and to think that it is time for new men to come in. Lord Beaconsfield made up his mind and issued a

GENERAL GORDON.
1833–1885

long, high-flown manifesto in the spring of 1880, announcing his intention to appeal to the country by a dissolution of Parliament, for what would be called in French political life a fresh mandate. The result of the elections was that the Liberals came back to power with a strong majority, and Gladstone became once again Prime Minister.

In the meantime the Sovereign had suffered a deep sorrow, and the whole country was a sympathetic sharer of her grief. The sorrow came with the death of the Princess Alice, the Queen's second daughter and third child, who died on the 14th of December, 1878. The Princess had had sixteen years of happy married life with her husband, the Grand Duke of Hesse. She was known to be a devoted friend as well as a devoted daughter to her mother; and the mourning assumed for her was something far different indeed from the ordinary court ceremonial.

The force of events soon compelled Gladstone to take upon himself the responsibility of accepting for England the sole conduct of affairs in Egypt. That responsibility has entailed upon England many a risk and many a sacrifice. Expedition after expedition southward has been called for to maintain the position which England believed herself compelled to accept. It cost, among other gallant lives, the life of the noble-hearted General Gordon. "The Englishman," said Kinglake, in his "Eothen" forty years before, "straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile and sit in the seats of the Faithful." Many have questioned, and always will question, the policy which

induced England to adopt so terrible a responsibility; but the policy was none of Gladstone's making, and under the circumstances which surrounded him at the time of the troubles in Alexandria, there seemed no other course left open to British statesmanship than that which he recommended. The part he took in regard to South Africa has been condemned by most of his opponents, and by some even of his habitual supporters. England had been induced by utterly mistaken representations to proclaim herself the Sovereign of the Transvaal Republic, a republic of Boers descended for the most part from Dutch ancestors. The Boers would have none of our rule; they fought against us and they fought with success. Our arms received for the time a complete defeat.

Gladstone, suddenly called to power, had to deal with this crisis. No one can doubt that if he had so decided, he could have sent out to South Africa a force sufficiently strong to trample the Boers into the dust, and reduce their Republic for the time into a vassal colony of the British Crown. Gladstone would do nothing of the kind. His conscience and his judgment told him that we had been deceived into the annexation of the Boer Republic; he was convinced that we were entirely in the wrong, and the Boers were only doing what any colonists of English descent would have done under the same conditions. He refused to see any national glory in the deliberate slaughter of a number of Boers. He did not believe that the honour of the British flag would shine any the brighter for such an act

of vengeance. He made peace with the Boers and allowed their Republic to stand.

The condition of Ireland was meanwhile growing more and more disturbed. Coercion Act after Coercion Act, introduced by Liberals and Conservatives in succession, only served to increase disorder, and on the 6th of May, 1882, the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, aroused the horror of the whole civilised world. Lord Frederick Cavendish had just been appointed Chief Secretary to the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Spencer, and both were appointed by Mr. Gladstone as an evidence of his intention to govern Ireland on the principle of an advanced liberal policy. The murders were the result of a conspiracy formed by a small knot of men in Dublin, who were opposed to anything like constitutional agitation, who lived upon disorder and crime, and who believed that Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, was in possession of information which must lead to the discovery of their previous crime. The murderers were afterwards convicted and executed. They were, in fact, a gang of desperadoes such as is unfortunately to be found in the wake of every great organic political movement. For a time the cause of Home Rule seemed to have been thrown almost hopelessly back, but Mr. Gladstone was not a man to confound the deeds of a knot of miscreants with the national cause of a people. Gladstone's study of Irish politics convinced him gradually of the justice of the Home Rule claim. In 1885 his government was defeated in a vote on a question of financial

policy. Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives returned to power, but only for a few months, and then there was a general election, as the result of which Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals found themselves in office once again.

Gladstone on April 8, 1886, introduced a Bill to establish a system of Home Rule in Ireland. The principal object of the measure was to give to Ireland some such system of domestic self-government as is possessed by each of our great colonies. There was, however, a difference caused by the actual condition of things. Ireland is represented in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. Canada and the Australasian colonies have no such representation. Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to meet this difficulty by withdrawing from Ireland its representation at Westminster. Many English Liberals who were quite willing to admit the principle of Home Rule for Ireland, objected altogether to the withdrawal of the Irish members from Westminster which they declared would be to set up an unprecedented system of taxation without representation. That, however, was not the most serious difficulty in the way of Gladstone's Bill. Some of his most influential supporters objected altogether to the principle of Home Rule as applied to Ireland; and the result was that a most formidable secession from the ranks of Mr. Gladstone's followers took place. Lord Hartington, now the Duke of Devonshire, joined with the Tory Opposition on this measure, so did Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and so, too, did a man whose name carried a far greater weight with the public in general than either Lord

PARNELL.
1846–1891.

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Hartington or Mr. Chamberlain—the late Mr. John Bright. The Bill was defeated in the House of Commons on the second reading. Mr. Gladstone appealed to the country, and the result was that the Conservatives, with the help of the seceders, the dissentient Liberals as they were called, came back into power. Lord Salisbury formed a Government, and with the help of the dissentient Liberals had a strong majority at his back. He succeeded in passing one very important measure—the Local Government Bill for England and Wales, which established County Councils and Borough Councils in every administrative division as arranged by the measure; each Council to consist of Councillors and Aldermen; the constituents to be Parliamentary electors and also local ratepayers, whether men or women. Nothing could have been more satisfactory than the working on the whole of this valuable measure. It reorganised the public life of English counties and boroughs, brought the administration of local and municipal affairs directly within the control of the public, and put a stop to the old conditions under which local cliques, and what were called interests, were virtually endowed with the mal-administration of local affairs and local money.

On March 27, 1889, one of the greatest orators of the English Parliament passed away. Mr. Bright died in his seventy-eighth year. He was probably the only man in the House of Commons, during his time, who could have been called a rival of Mr. Gladstone in eloquence. There were many who believed that although he did not possess Mr.

Gladstone's inexhaustible capacity for debate, there were some of his speeches in which he surpassed even Mr. Gladstone. As it was said by an observer, Bright was not so ready with the bow, but he could sometimes shoot his arrow higher than Gladstone could." Bright had been for many years a devoted follower of Gladstone's, and had twice taken office under his influence. He withdrew from Gladstone's Administration in 1882 because he could not support the Egyptian policy of the Liberal Government; and as has just been stated he was strongly opposed to Gladstone's proposal for Home Rule in Ireland.

In 1892, Gladstone was again at the head of a Liberal Ministry, and undismayed by the events of the past he again introduced a Home Rule Measure for Ireland. This time he provided that a certain representation should be retained by Irish members at Westminster, and by this concession he got back the support of some of those who had seceded from his leadership in 1886. The most influential among the seceders still held to their position and opposed Home Rule under any conditions. The Bill, however, was carried in the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords. In the meantime serious divisions took place amongst the Irish Nationalist party—divisions arising out of an unhappy divorce proceeding in which Mr. Parnell was co-respondent—and the division led to Parnell's removal from the leadership of the party. Parnell died suddenly at Brighton, in October, 1891, in his forty-fifth year. His was the tragic story of what might well have been called a great career suddenly

FORTH BRIDGE.

blighted by one sad error. The result of his death and the divisions that came before it, and followed it, undoubtedly was to throw back the Home Rule cause for the time, although, of course, no one who admitted the justice of the principle and recognised its practicability as illustrated in the working of the colonial systems, could possibly believe that the cause of Irish Home Rule was buried in the grave of Parnell.

Of late years a passion for the acquirement of territory in Africa seems to have taken hold of nearly the whole of the European States. England is breaking new ground in one region of Africa, France in another, Germany in yet another; even Italy and Belgium and Portugal must have their share in the redistribution of African soil. We are constantly disturbed by rumours of war between the English and French in West Africa, and the forward policy, as it may be called, of some of our own settlers in South Africa has led to disturbance there already — Jameson's raid for instance—and may at any time lead to more disturbance still. Over these later impulses to international disturbance Mr. Gladstone had no control. He withdrew from public life on March 1, 1894, and his disappearance seemed to change the face of politics in these countries. He withdrew from Parliament because he believed that advancing years, although they had in no wise diminished the strength of his intellect, or frozen the torrent of his eloquence, left him without the physical strength which had once enabled him to defy fatigue in the work of parliamentary statesmanship. He had lost mean-

while, by death, his two great friends and allies, Earl Russell and John Bright. It is not too much to say that the House of Commons no longer seemed the same place when that noble presence was withdrawn from its debates, and that ever-healthy influence could guide its councils no more.

XV

THE CLOSE OF SOME GREAT CAREERS

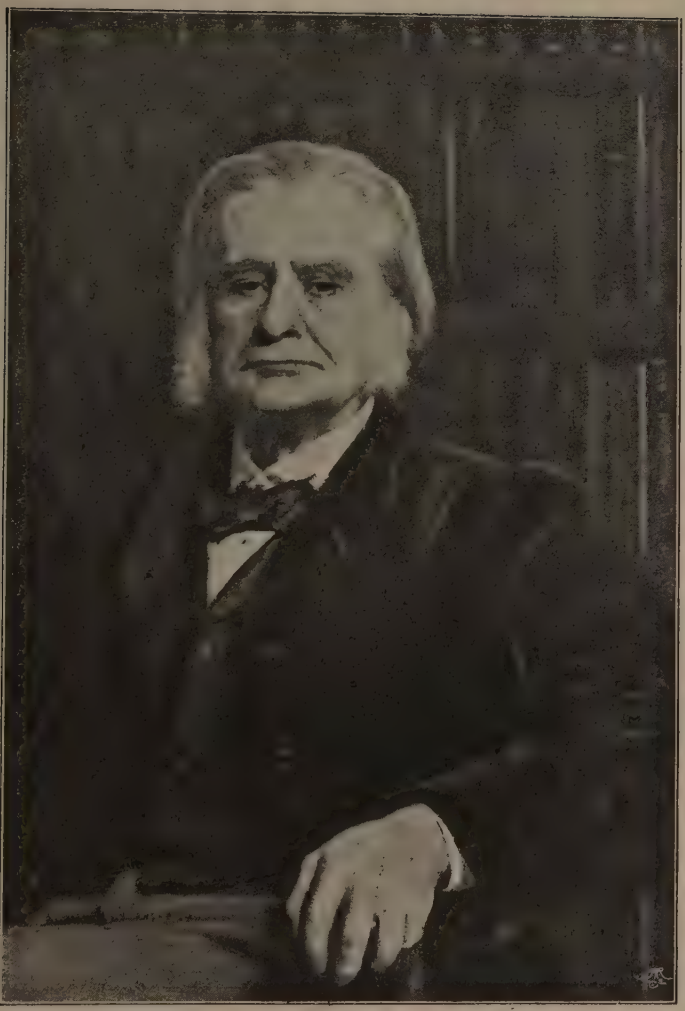
FOR some time before and shortly after Mr. Gladstone's retirement, there had been a remarkable succession of deaths among remarkable men in England. In 1890 Cardinal Newman, one of the most celebrated of modern ecclesiastics, died at Edgbaston. Lord Granville died in London on March 31, 1891. The Earl of Granville, as his full title describes him, had made for himself a distinguished name in the political history of the later years of Queen Victoria's reign. He was an advanced Liberal in politics, and had sat in the House of Commons for a short time, but succeeded to the peerage very young, and worked out nearly the whole of his political career in the House of Lords. He had more than once held the office of Foreign Secretary and Colonial Secretary, and was President of the Council and leader of the House of Lords. He had served under Lord Palmerston and under Mr. Gladstone, and was a supporter of Gladstone's Home Rule policy. Had he been a man of a more pushing disposition he might easily have been Prime Minister; but he was always willing to make his

personal claims subservient to the general good of his party. He was a graceful and convincing debater, and as a ceremonial speaker or an after-dinner speaker had but few rivals in the England of our time. On the 14th of January, 1892, the regular line of succession to the Throne was broken by the death of the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert Victor, who had been created Duke of Clarence two years before his death. His place in the succession to the Throne was filled by his younger brother, the Duke of York. On the same day died Henry Edward Manning, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, one of the greatest Princes of the Catholic Church in modern times; esteemed by all alike as a philanthropist and a social reformer. In the same year Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, died. As a poet, Tennyson held a position during his lifetime which might be considered almost absolutely unique. In general popularity he had no rival. Many, indeed, there were who devoted themselves more absolutely to Robert Browning, a poet, it need hardly be said, of undoubted genius, a man richly endowed with the creative faculty, who had insight into the very deeps of humanity, and who yet had the eye of a genuine artist for all the outer moods of nature. Browning, who had died in 1889, was often too obscure to captivate the general public, and his measure lacked the exquisite, the super-sensuous melody with which Tennyson could bewitch the English-speaking world. John Tyndall, one of the most brilliant illustrators of modern science, died on the 4th of December, 1893. Tyndall, like one of Robert

Browning's heroes, was ever a fighter. His fame was won not so much as the author of new discoveries in science as it was by his faculty of bringing to the exposition of his own views a marvellous power of eloquence and of illustration. He was, perhaps, the most brilliant scientific lecturer known to our modern days. In October of the following year, died James Anthony Froude, the historian, whose historical studies had aroused, perhaps, a keener controversy than those of any worker in the same field since Macaulay. Froude's style was especially picturesque, he had a passion for the romantic and the heroic which lent to his historical essays a peculiar fascination, but which some of his less friendly critics declared drew him too often away from the hard and arid byways of mere facts into the Armida bowers and tangled groves of imagination. He was in this way a great contrast to Edward Augustus Freeman, his rival as many critics declared, the severely accurate and thoughtfully stern historian, whom no allurements could win away from the most exhaustive research and the severest truths of narrative. Freeman died two years before the death of Froude. On 29th of June, 1895, Thomas Huxley, a man whose name will ever be associated in science with the names of Darwin and Tyndall, passed away from the world which he had done so much to instruct by his research, and to delight by his eloquence. Huxley, like Tyndall, was a scientific teacher of the combative order; he had a bright wit and a ready humour; he gave no quarter in controversy and he asked for none, and his essays are delightful reading, even for those

who could not acknowledge the teaching of the scientific school to which he belonged.

On the 24th of January, 1895, there died a man of great mark indeed but of a very different order of renown from any of those who have just been mentioned—Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill. Lord Randolph, as he was familiarly called, was but comparatively young when he died, only in his forty-sixth year; but he had made a distinct reputation for himself in Parliament, and strong hopes were at one time entertained that he might lead a great Administration there. A descendant of the famous Duke of Marlborough, he entered the House of Commons when very young, and after some years of reserve and habitual silence there he suddenly sprang up as the leader of a new party, the Fourth Party, as it was called, which professed to be absolutely independent alike of Liberals, Conservatives, and Irish Nationalists. Although he belonged, by tradition and by training, to the Conservative Party, he made himself conspicuous by his dashing attacks on the Conservative Government. He was a fearless and brilliant leader of guerilla warfare, and although his Fourth Party only consisted of four members, their chief included, he made himself a sore trouble to any statesman who happened to be in power. He was, however, credited with gifts much greater than those which belonged to a leader of political guerillas, and he became Secretary for India, in the first instance, and afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. In both offices he showed a capacity for statesmanship of a very high order, a free-



THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY.
1825–1895.

dom from the bondage of commonplace routine, an extraordinary power of application and a readiness to receive and to welcome new ideas. His health, however, became weakly and uncertain, he was an unsparing worker in every kind of work to which his genius led him, he overtaxed his strength, and he died without accomplishing the success which, of later years, his political opponents as well as his political friends were waiting in full confidence for him to realise.

On Mr. Gladstone's withdrawal from public life, Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister. There was nothing else for it; there was no other man whom the Liberal Party could put in his place. But it would be idle to question the fact that many Liberals complained, not so much of the choice as of the conditions which made the choice all but inevitable. In the first instance, as we have already pointed out, there is a strong and growing objection in the Liberal Party to the appointment of a Prime Minister whose place compels him to be in the House of Lords. In the present instance, however, there were other grounds for complaint. Lord Rosebery was regarded by many as not a sufficiently advanced Liberal to become the head of a Liberal Administration. There was a sort of feeling that he had not devoted himself absolutely to politics, that he was a lover of politics as he was a lover of travelling and of horse-racing, and of art and of books, that what one of his critics called the "fatal mark of the amateur" was on him. Then, again, many were of opinion that the high Parliamentary position and the long services

of Sir William Harcourt entitled him to be the Liberal Prime Minister as well as the Liberal leader of the House of Commons. But Sir William Harcourt was not very popular with all the Liberals, and his name did not carry so much weight with the country in general as the name of Lord Rosebery. Every one acknowledged his gifts as a resourceful Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his power as a fighting leader of the Liberal Opposition ; but many even of his own colleagues doubted whether he would carry the full support of the Liberal public if he were to be made Prime Minister. The Liberal Government held in its inner circle, at least one man of the highest intellect and undoubted statesmanlike capacity in the person of Mr. John Morley ; but Mr. Morley had not been long enough in public life from the time when he exchanged the student's desk for a seat in the House of Commons to accustom the Liberal Party to the idea of his becoming the immediate successor to Mr. Gladstone. A few years before there seemed every chance that Sir Charles Dilke would have been designated as the Liberal Prime Minister in the event of Mr. Gladstone's retirement. Sir Charles Dilke was one of the most practical and the best informed men in the House of Commons. His knowledge of foreign affairs was unequalled probably by that of any other man on either side of the House ; and what other men knew through blue books and newspapers, Sir Charles Dilke knew by personal observation and by study on the spot. But owing to a private trouble Sir Charles Dilke had for some time ceased to be regarded as a

(From a photograph by Messrs. Russell & Son.)

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY.

1847–

possible occupant of office, and even those who most admired his ability and his knowledge of public affairs, did not venture to suggest his name. Lord Rosebery therefore became Prime Minister; and during his short retention of office he maintained his position with dignity, with judgment, and with more than one display of high and genuine Parliamentary eloquence. But the fate of the Ministry was already foreshadowed; and when the Government were defeated on a sudden motion finding fault with them concerning a detail of comparatively little importance in the arrangements of the army, Lord Rosebery and his colleagues accepted the defeat as a vote of censure; an appeal was made to the country, and Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives came back to office with an immense majority to sustain them in the House of Commons.

The Conservative Government had a difficult task before them, especially where foreign politics were concerned. China had once again become a region to tempt the ambition of Western traders and Western politicians. The war between China and Japan which had ended in the defeat of the Chinese, despite their vast superiority in the number of their population, in the extent of their territory and in their wealth, seemed to have suddenly called the attention of all the great Continental Powers to the expediency of securing each for itself some portion of Chinese soil, or at least the right of control over such a portion, in order to open up new fields for the ambition of the colonists, the trader, the soldier, and the statesman. Russia, Germany, and France vied

with each other in the practical application of the new policy, and a large proportion of public opinion in England proclaimed that if Lord Salisbury did not take a firm stand England would be left out of the competition altogether.

Another element of disturbance seemed likely to agitate the politics of Europe. The great American Republic appeared inclined to abandon the creed of Washington and other great American statesmen since his time, and to claim a right of interference in the politics of the old world. Just at this time a war broke out between the United States and Spain on account of the manner in which the island of Cuba, lying not far off the coast of the American state of Florida, was governed by its Spanish masters. The war is only mentioned here as illustrating one of the new difficulties which seem to threaten the Conservative Government of England. As every reasonable observer must have expected, Spain was completely beaten in the struggle, and within less than three months lost two navies and several of her strong places in the West Indies and in the Philippines. Everything indicated that while their strong majority would probably enable them to take what course they pleased in domestic affairs, the disturbed condition of foreign affairs would be a serious trial to the Conservative statesmen.

During the winter of 1895, the public began to be alarmed with reports of Mr. Gladstone's decaying health. For a long time these reports remained unheeded for the good reason that Mr. Gladstone's

THE TOWER BRIDGE.

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intellectual activity seemed as unresting as it ever had been when he was in the very zenith of his physical powers and in the thick of his political struggles. For though he had quitted public life Mr. Gladstone did not withdraw his intellect, and his sympathies, from the interests of his own people and of foreign peoples, especially of peoples who were in his own words, "rightly struggling to be free." He made known his views in eloquent written words with regard to the persecutions inflicted by the Ottoman Government on the unhappy Christians under Turkish rule. He championed once again the national claims of Greece and the demand of the Cretans to be for ever released from Ottoman oppression and allowed to cast in their destinies with those of the Greek kingdom. Had Mr. Gladstone been once again in physical strength, once again able to lead a crusade in defence of a rightful cause, we may well be allowed to believe that the power of the Ottoman in the South of Europe would have been quickly deprived of some of its chances of oppression.

Mr. Gladstone, from time to time, made known his views on various other questions of interest, religious, literary, and artistic; and the best men in all countries felt with gladness that the guiding light of his intellect and his sympathy had not been wholly withdrawn from the world. On the 1st of June, 1896, Mr. Gladstone delivered a remarkable exposition of his views on the relations between the Church of England and the Church of Rome in reference to a letter addressed to the English people

by Pope Leo the Thirteenth, which seemed almost like an appeal for a reunion of the Churches. We mention the fact only as a further illustration of Gladstone's indomitable mental energy, enduring to the last.

In the winter of 1897, however, Mr. Gladstone removed to Cannes, in the south of France, a favourite winter retreat of his, and we all expected his return to England with renewed health, when the later spring should come to soften and brighten the atmosphere of England. But the winter at Cannes was unusually sharp and chill, and Mr. Gladstone's medical advisers thought it better that he should try the climate of Bournemouth. He tried the climate of Bournemouth, but the result brought little cheer to his family and his friends. Then at last it was made known that it was thought best he should return to the familiar air of his home, at Hawarden Castle; and when this news was sent over the world, every one felt sure that the end was near. Gladstone was coming home, as Edmund Burke had done, to die. The end was not long delayed. On the 19th of May, Ascension Day, 1898, Gladstone died at Hawarden, surrounded by the wife and children who loved him and whom he had loved. The demand of the nation was that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey, and his family yielded to the demand with the sole reservation, which his own dying wishes had secured, that a place must be kept beside his coffin for the coffin of his devoted wife. Gladstone's corpse was removed to London, and it lay coffined in state for the reverent homage of the public in the grand and

historic Westminster Hall. Then the coffin was consigned to earth in Westminster Abbey with a ceremonial as majestic as solemn, and at the same time as simple, as ever expressed the homage of princes and of people to a statesman who had won the love of his people and the admiration of the civilised world.

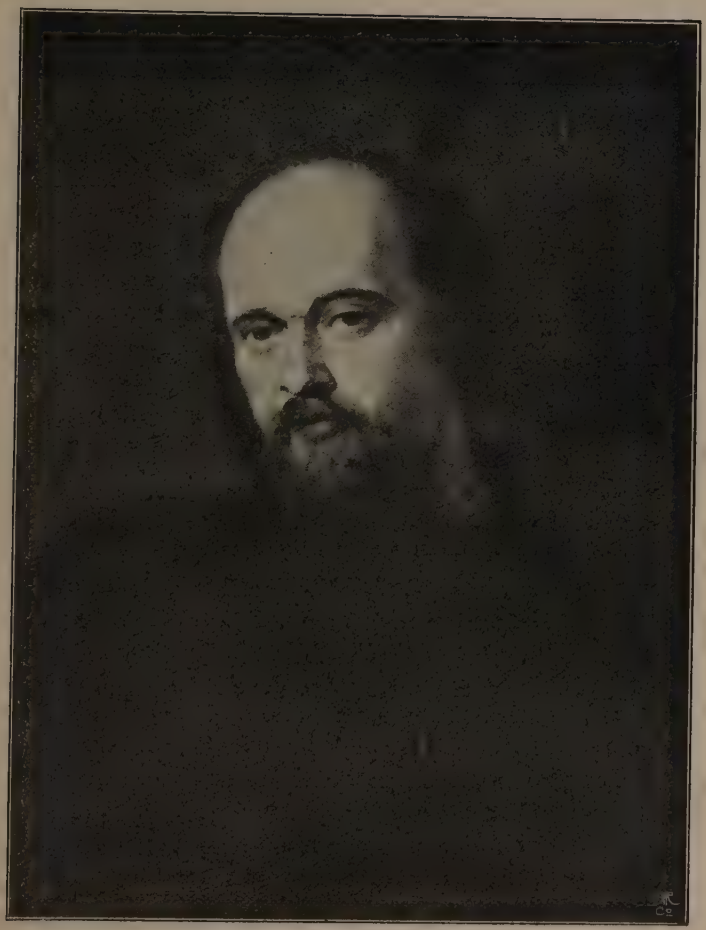
XVI

LITERATURE, ART, AND SCIENCE

It would be impossible to conclude the story of England's Nineteenth Century without saying something about its literature, its art, and its science. It would be impossible also, in the space at our command to attempt anything like an adequate exposition of such a subject. The literature of the century may be divided into two great portions, that which belonged to its opening years, and that which belongs to the reign of Queen Victoria. All that we value of Sir Walter Scott and of Jane Austen came after the opening of the century. The same may be said of Byron, of Shelley, of Wordsworth, and of Keats. Perhaps not quite the same is to be said of Coleridge, "the rapt one with the godlike forehead, the heaven-eyed creature," as Wordsworth called him; or of Southey; but the most that we value in both writers and in Crabbe makes part of the century's history. Lamb, "the frolic and the gentle," to use Wordsworth's language again, began early in the century and has been seen by men still living. Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, had done his

work before the Queen offered him the place of Poet Laureate on Wordsworth's death. English poetry holds no higher names than those of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. In later days we have had Tennyson, Robert Browning, Mrs. Browning, Thomas Hood, Sir Henry Taylor, Philip James Bailey, Matthew Arnold, Dante Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, William Morris, Swinburne, Lord Lytton, Walter Savage Landor, "Owen Meredith," Austin Dobson, William Allingham, Clarence Mangan, and many younger poets, who have not yet perhaps quite given their measure. After the days of Walter Scott, the literature of fiction came for awhile to a pause. It seemed as if fiction were waiting for a fresh breath of life, or were seeking for a new direction. The age contented itself for a season with such reflections of Walter Scott as were found in the now forgotten romances of G. P. R. James—James of the "solitary horseman." Then came Bulwer-Lytton's novels of fashion, sentiment, politics and highwaymen, and some of Disraeli's brilliant studies from parliamentary life and political action. At last the new breath came into fiction when Dickens told of the middle classes and the poor, and Thackeray pictured the life of the West-end and society. As Mr. George Gissing says in his remarkable study of Dickens: "Thackeray and Dickens supplement each other, and, however wide apart the lives they depict, to a striking degree confirm each other's views of a certain era in the history of England. These two men, each a master and without a rival in his own field, created the fiction of Queen Victoria's reign,

and were followed by numberless imitators, until imitation in each path grew fainter and feebler, and at last left no footprint behind." The novels of Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell sought and found new fields of life-study and are destined to an enduring name in literature. Charles Kingsley, Captain Marryat, Whyte Melville, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, R. L. Stevenson, and William Black, each won for himself —in his own sphere—a distinctive place ; and so, too, did the dashing author of "Charles O'Malley," the brilliant and popular Irish story-teller, Charles Lever. We purposely abstain from any attempt to chronicle the names of living writers whose very names would make a lengthened catalogue, even if it were only to enclose a list of those who showed genuine reality and merit. We must, however, mention such novelists as George Meredith, Blackmore, Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, and Rudyard Kipling. We have had all sorts of novels ; the novel of sensation, the novel of scenery, the novels of town life and country life, the psychical novels, the novels with a purpose, the novels with a problem ; and in later days some successful attempts to revive the story of adventure by sea and land. Among the historians and biographers of the century we have to reckon Hallam, Grote, Carlyle, Macaulay, the elder Mill, Freeman, Froude, J. R. Green, Stubbs, Gardiner, Kaye, Malleson, Lecky, Bryce, and John Morley. Among essayists, Sydney Smith, Charles Lamb, and again Macaulay and Ruskin, and again Stevenson, still stand un-



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.
1828–1882.

SEA
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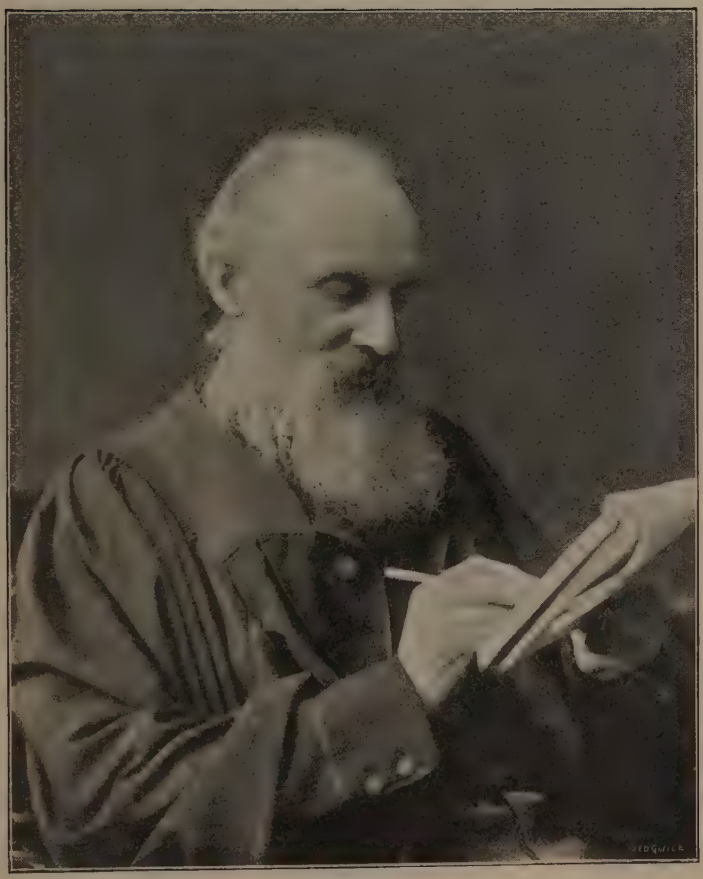
rivalled. Science, mental, economic, and physical, can boast the names of writers like Richard Owen, Charles Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, Whately and Herbert Spencer, to select a few of the better known names. In painting, the early part of the century claims such masters as Constable and Wilkie, Turner, Mulready, Etty and Maclise; while the reign of Queen Victoria enjoys the fame of Eastlake, Millais, Leighton, Ford Madox Brown, Watts, Burne-Jones, Holman Hunt, and Dante Rossetti. Nor must we forget to speak of the new work of illustrative art which was developed to enrich and illumine the kindly satire of genial Mr. Punch, and the names of such men as John Leech, Tenniel, and George Du Maurier. We have had great sculptors too — Chantrey, the two Westmacotts father and son, Boehm, Woolner, the poet sculptor, Gibson, Onslow Ford, and Foley, of whom it was well said that he would have been accounted a great sculptor even among the Greeks of the classic days. In art it should be said there is no such thing as steady progress, or, indeed, progress that can be measured at all. Science expands her domain year by year, and will go on making new discoveries and finding fresh fields of labour for ever. But Art makes herself manifest by fits and starts, and has her periods of action and reaction. The world sees no advance upon Homer, and Sophocles, and Dante, and Shakespeare; will see no advance on Goethe and Shelley, or, to come later still, on Tennyson and Browning. In dramatic art the century cannot indeed boast any great comedies like those of

Sheridan and Goldsmith, but during the latter part of the century there has been a very healthy reaction against a practice which had for many years been reducing the English stage to a mere medium for reproductions from the French. Thomas William Robertson revived the natural and wholesome practice of seeking for the materials of English drama in English life, and the revival has been steadily maintained by Mr. Arthur W. Pinero, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, and others. On the stage itself the century saw the whole success of Edmund Kean, and later it had Macready, Phelps, Charles Kean, Ellen Tree, Helen Faucit, and many other brilliant actors and actresses. In our own time we have men like Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, Beerbohm Tree, J. L. Toole, and Johnston Forbes-Robertson and many others ; women like Ellen Terry, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and many others too. The best that can be said for the art of England's Nineteenth Century is that it has fairly held its own, that it has made its mark on the world, and that, so long as England's Augustan age is remembered and written about, the age of Victoria will be recorded with honour. But if the work of the artist cannot be expected to make progress, we at least have a right to say that the number of readers and of admirers, the number of men and women who love to read books and look upon statues and pictures, is growing by leaps and bounds. Education has spread itself in England in a manner which would have seemed incredible, had he been foretold of its growth, to Brougham when he was promoting the "Penny Cyclopædia for the diffusion of useful knowledge,"



LORD KELVIN.

1824–

and when he proudly boasted that "The schoolmaster is abroad." The real growth of popular education may be said to be the chief pride of the Victorian age. The whole history of the Nineteenth Century, as we have endeavoured to trace it, is one of growth. We have shown how reform succeeded reform, how time-dishonoured anomalies and iniquities of legislation have been abolished, how the laws that made men poor and kept them poor, that made freedom to enjoy life only the monopoly of the class, and left the poorer citizen to be a mere toiler in suffering and the dark, have been gradually changed and obliterated by a legislation of freedom—a legislation which cannot, indeed, bring about absolute social equality and strives after no such idle and futile object; but a legislation which aims at setting every one free to make the very best of his own conditions of life, to develop his intelligence, and to add by honest endeavour to his own daily comfort and happiness. The great Italian statesman, Count Cavour, once said that the happiness or the misery of a people was all only a question of good or bad government—that is to say, of good or bad legislation. That was a generous and exalted utterance; but, of course, we must not take it by its literal meaning. What it meant in spirit and in sense was, that bad legislation can go far to thwart the most splendid gifts of climate and of soil, and of physical manhood. "Only in law," said Goethe, "can the spirit of man be free;" but the law must deal equally, as far as it can, with those who are to be endowed with that spirit of freedom. The

story of England's Nineteenth Century will be read with little intelligence indeed if it be not read with that understanding and that appreciation. It is the story of a struggle towards the light, a struggle impeded by many obstacles and broken by many disasters, and with much sad confusion and temporary reaction now and then, but still a struggle towards the light. If such be, on the whole, the record and the lesson of the century now drawing to a close, it may be fairly said that it could not have a nobler epitaph.

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